Arthur Sullivant Hoffman
Managing Editor

ADVENTURE

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IN OUR editorial page Russell B. Huffman, who wrote "Through Perilous Peru," was once quoted as referring to the "comedy revolutions" of Haiti. The following letter in reply to those two little words opens up some pretty big questions, humorous and otherwise, and doubtless some of our many readers who are familiar with conditions in the West Indies or in Central or South America will have something to say on one side or the other.

To me personally there is always something irresistibly amusing in the noisy little light-opera revolutions that the various countries to the south of us are eternally pulling off like moving-picture films for us to look at from a distance. But I have never been stood up and shot to death against a wall, nor had my home and belongings taken away from me every few minutes, nor had my friends and family killed before my eyes. I haven't even had my slumber disturbed at night by a lot of wild-eyed and hungry patriots running up and down the street in large and ragged pants and taking pot-shots at anything that didn't pot-shot them first. Those things might make a difference, of course. And, after all, there isn't anything essentially humorous in killing people.

But here is the letter:

ON THE question of Haiti, Mr. Editor, I have one little bone to pick with you. No doubt you used the phrase "comedy revolutions" with amiable intentions, but I am cranky on this subject, and I don't like the phrase. I am a newspaper man, and claim to have a fair sense of humor, but from my personal knowledge of Haitian revolutions I can gather little that would brand them as comedies. On the other hand, they are tragedies—tragedies that come nearer home than most folks imagine.

In St. Marc, Haiti, from where Mr. Huffman wrote you, I turned one day into a street to find an old cannon pointing at me. A few soldiers came forward and told me I could not pass through that street. As I turned to go around another way, I took another look at that cannon, and it was easy to see that it couldn't have been shot off by an expert—it was of an ancient type, and its muzzle was choked up with cement. Even if it had been usable, it was mounted in such a way that its ball could have hit nothing else than the Government's own arsenal, two hundred feet away! I admit that this is *comedy*.

A few days later I was walking near the new cathedral in Port-au-Prince, the capital, when I heard several volleys from rifles. A few minutes later I saw the body of a man lying under the very wall of the cathedral yard. He had been shot down by order of the prefect of police, and I did not have to inquire far to learn that the dead man was one of a few peaceable farmers of the section. He left a widow and seven children. His brother had been a political enemy of the prefect. The President, Antoine Simon, was absent from the city at the time, otherwise I believe the shooting would not have occurred. This, surely, is *tragedy*. So is what happened a night or two later. Seven political prisoners were released from jail, and then quietly rearrested, taken to the cemetery wall and shot down. Several of the men had to be shot a dozen times before they were dead, for Haitian soldiers can't shoot for sour apples. A few nights later a little skirmish occurred in a public street, and three bullets entered the house of an American citizen and his family. One of the bullets buried itself in the headboard of the bed in which two children were sleeping.

Only a month before President Simon was driven from the country, in the last revolution, I talked with him in his palace in Port-au-Prince.

"There is no hope for the advancement of my country and my people," he said, "*until white folk take us seriously.*"

He spoke the tragic, pathetic truth.

WE SPEAK of the turmoils in Haiti, and other small tropical countries, as "comedy revolutions." Perhaps we wouldn't if we remembered that nearly every such revolution is inspired, not by natives, but by white folk. There are important concessions to be had in these countries, and if the Government in power won't grant them, a little money and a filibustering expedition will provide a native with political aspirations with the means to start a revolution. In return for this assistance he promises to grant the desired concessions when he gets control of the Government. The backing for many revolutions has come from sources close to us living here in the big cities of the United States. An American banker said to me one day:

"Yes, of course, the butchery that accompanies these revolutions in Haiti is unpleasant. But you don't want to tell a lot of unpleasant things about conditions there, for it might affect our business interests."

Comedy revolutions!

I have been in Haiti twice, with revolution rampant on both occasions. The country is extraordinarily beautiful, fertile, and with great natural resources. There are no indigenous diseases. But revolutions prevent sanitary development in the cities, prevent the upbuilding of farming and other industries, prevent education. The country is bankrupt—and white adventurers, largely German and American, hang around like vultures.

There is no hope for Haiti till we become educated to the serious aspects of its situation, and do something, as intelligent white folk, to help that republic along the road of advancement. "Dollar diplomacy," as set forth in EVERYBODY'S, is the white folk's crime. I hope that humanity may supersede diplomacy ere long. God speed the day!

Yours very truly,

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In the Bank Fog

By Frederick William Wallace

SKIPPER WINSLOW swayed his body with the lurch of the vessel and glanced over the cards spread out on the locker.

"I've got you, Jim!" he cried exultantly. "Two aces an' th' jack. Hand over th' pot, my bully! It'll jest about pay for that pair o' rubber boots I bought from Johnny there."

With a snort of disgust, Jim Cameron shoved the small collection of silver over, and as the skipper arose from the inverted bucket upon which he had been seated the card-players stowed the well-worn pack away and calculated they go for'ard for a "mug up."

While the cabin crowd were making their way full speed for the "shack" locker, Winslow tossed his winnings into the chart drawer and proceeded to study the well-thumbed map of the Atlantic coast from Halifax to the Delaware.

"Where are we now, skipper?" inquired Bill Logan, the spare hand, as he piled another shovelful of coal on the stove.

"Somewhere on th' western edge of La Have," answered Winslow. "Th' last sound was forty-six fathoms, an' as we've been a-joggin' for th' best part of th' day, I cal'late we ain't very far away from that. Jump on deck, Bill, an' see if th' fog's liftin' any."

The spare hand clambered leisurely up the companion—he was a fat man and could

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not be hurried—and took a squint at the dense pall which shrouded everything.

"Thick as mud, skipper," he reported. "Ye cain't see th' forem'st from aft here, an' th' winds dyin' or goin' t' shift. Fine night for a blame steamer t' slam inter us."

Winslow looked up from the chart with just a trace of anxiety in his clean-cut face. It is the skipper aboard a fishing vessel who does all the worrying, not the men; and fog gives him more concern than the wildest winds that blow. Closing the drawer, he pulled on his oilskins and after a glance at the barometer hovering on the thirty, went up on deck. Pacing the quarter, a shadowy figure hailed him.

"Thick, skipper. Wind's goin' flat. In another hour she'll be slammin' them blasted booms about an' keepin' a man from his sleep with th' racket. —— fogs, anyway!" As an afterthought, he added: "Who won th' game?"

"I did," answered Winslow. "Got Johnny Watson's new rubber boots out of it. Who's lookin' out for'ard? Where's your dory-mate?"

"Down muggin' up, I cal'late," replied the figure. "He's an awful feller fur his belly is that dory-mate o' mine. He's eatin' an' muggin' up th' best part o' his time——"

"He is, eh?" growled the other. "Waal, you go for'ard an' haul him away from fillin' that hole in his face, an' tell him to stand on watch when it's his watch! By th' Lord Harry! Ye'd think it was to anchor in harbor we were, instead of bein' in th' track of steamers and a fog as thick as your dory-mate's skull. Get him up an' standin' for'ard by th' windlass with th' horn, an' tell him it's only one blast for starb'd tack, or he'll be pumpin' that blame horn to whatever tune comes into his head. An' say, you git a couple torches up aft here an' keep 'em handy for showin' as soon as you hear anythin'. I ain't runnin' no risks after th' *Grace Thomas* was run down on this same spot. Ten of her gang went to their long port that time, ye'll remember."

All hands turned in early. Fishermen leave the skipper to worry about the fog and place more of their trust in him than they do in Providence. A "set" had been made in the morning, but the fog shut down at noon, and after "dressing down," the gang enjoyed a "lay off" after six days of hard fishing. Down in the schooner's hold were stowed some one hundred thousand pounds of fresh fish, and with enough herring bait for one more day Winslow kept the vessel jogging on the berth until the fog thinned out sufficiently to warrant hoisting the dories out.

With her jumbo tail rope belayed to windward, the *Isabel Winslow* lifted to the oily roll of the swell, and as she wallowed in the trough with scarcely enough wind to keep the sails full, the canvas flapped; reef-points and gaff-downhauls pattered and slapped, and the booms fetched up on the jibing gear with shocks which caused the schooner to tremble in every timber.

AT MIDNIGHT, when the wind dropped, the pandemonium on deck was too much even for hardened sleepers like fishermen, and in their bunks they cursed the noise with weird oaths. From his berth Winslow bawled up the companion:

"Git th' boom tackle on! That infernal row is gettin' on my nerves. How's th' weather?"

A muffled voice from the deck answered: "Jest th' same. Shuttin' down thicker, if anything. I never see sich a fog."

Winslow yawned wearily.

"I cal'late I'd better get up on deck for a spell," he muttered. "These fellers are inclined t' be careless an' I ain't got any desire t' make my wife a widow. —— th' fog!" And grumbling to himself, he pulled on his boots and "oiled up."

It was thick and no error. In the darkness of the night the mist wreathed the sea in a ghostly pall.

Burke and the skipper paced the quarter, smoking, and for'ard Henderson, with the horn placed on the barrel of the windlass, sent the monotonous drone of the instrument into the mist at one minute intervals. It was wet and cold on deck, and Winslow's thoughts went back to the neat little cottage overlooking Anchorville Bay.

"Ay, Isabel," he murmured to himself, "'tis hard on th' girl that marries a fisherman. Ye have all the anxiety when your man's at sea. Every breeze o' wind that blows keeps ye worryin' about them on th' water, but th' winds are nawthin', sweetheart—'tis th' fogs that are th' worst. Th' cold, clammy, Atlantic fogs with th' steamers a-tearin' through them full pelt an' th' poor helpless devils o' fishermen a-tryin' to let them know where they are with a

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horn like th' cheep of a sparrow—" He stopped suddenly in his ruminations and listened, and Burke, who was thinking of a warm bunk and a mug-up, paused as well. "Did ye hear anything?" cried Winslow.

"I thought I h'ard a whistle out thar' jest now, but a feller fancies all kinds o' things in them bloody mists."

Whoo-oo-o-o-ah! Henderson was plying the horn for'ard, but beyond the gurgle and crash of water and gear nothing disturbed the otherwise uncanny stillness. Winslow stood by the gurry-kid listening intently, while Burke fell to pacing the deck again and wishing that his watch was up and he was in his blankets with a good hot mug of coffee under his belt. Suddenly Winslow's voice sung out with strident harshness on the heavy air:

"D'ye hear anything for'ard?" And rolling back from the mist came Henderson's hail: "Vessel blowin' a horn t' wind-'ard. Close aboard!"

Burke had stopped in his three steps and a turn and was staring out over the stern.

"Steamer whistlin' dead aft here, skipper!" he cried. Winslow jumped to Burke's side. *Zzzz-zz-zz-ah!* A steamer's siren all right. "——!" he ejaculated. "Two of them. Git them torches alight, they're both close aboard! Hurry, for th' love o' Mike, or they'll be into us!"

Zzzz-zz-zz-ah! The blare of the siren boomed out in the echoing fog. It seemed to come from various quarters, and hastily igniting the flaming torches, Burke and the skipper stared into the wall of vapor.

"Keep your eyes skinned for her lights!" cried Winslow. "She'll be——"

"Vessel's green light on th' starb'd bow!" sung out Henderson from the windlass for-'ard.

With a muttered oath, Winslow snatched up a flaring torch and ran for'ard.

"Here, Henderson," he cried, "take this torch an' keep that horn goin'! There's a steamer astern of us as well." Stepping over to the foc'sle scuttle, he shoved the slide back and bawled in a hurricane roar: "All up, fellers! Git yer torches up here! Up on deck now lively!"

"She's showin' her red an' green, skipper!" cried Henderson, excitedly pumping away at the droning horn. "There's her masthead light——"

"——! She'll be into us, by th' Lord Harry! Git th' cabin crowd out of their bunks, Burke, and all torches lighted!"

IN JIG time the whole crew were on deck and a dozen flaming, smoking kerosene torches illuminated the schooner's sails and spars in yellow effulgence, while the men, as they lounged around, stood out in silhouette against the glare—their anxious features limned in Rembrandtesque lines. *Hooo-oo-oo-o-o!* The steamer standing toward them shrieked shrilly, and almost imperceptibly her red light was eclipsed as she came around on a starboard helm. For a few seconds the thresh of her screw and the pulsating of her engines could be heard by the listening fishermen, then she vanished.

"Where's that other craft astern?" queried Winslow. "Can ye see him yet, fellers?"

Zzzzz-zz-zz-z-ah! From out of the murk on the schooner's starboard quarter it came, but no lights could be seen. Men listened intently—the strain being almost hypnotic—and though few had oilskins on, the chill of the night passed unnoticed. It is an eery feeling—a sensation of utter helplessness—to be slatting around in a fog becalmed and with steamers shrieking their warnings in the gloom. The fishermen begin to think of the poor fellows lying fathoms deep, sent to their doom in the smoking mists of the Banks. One never knows where to locate the blasts. They may be to starboard or port, ahead or astern, for the Bank fog plays queer tricks with acoustics, and until a light penetrates the vapor one has a feeling of insecurity which is positively nerve shaking. The skipper was the first to break into speech, and his voice seemed to grate on the ear:

"I cal'late that feller has passed astern of us. Listen!"

Whoo-oo-o-o! Zzzz-zz-zz-zah! The blasts, one high and piercing, and the other bass and vibrant, rolled out of the veil to starboard, and then something happened——

"What in Hades was that?" barked a hoarse voice. "Did ye hear it, boys? I c'd feel a shock of air on my face as if I was hit with a wet mitten!"

"They've come together!" cried Winslow. "Can't ye hear th' grind of metal? There go th' whistles now! Hark to them! Hear th' shouts! Holy Sailor!"

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The skipper jumped for the wheel and cast the becket off while the air resounded with siren blasts. Glancing around, he sniffed at the light air blowing over the quarter and bearing down with it the wreathing, smoking vapor.

"Draw away on your jumbo, there! Cast off that boom tackle!" Men sprang as if electrified to obey orders. "Main-sheet! Bring her aboard!" And the young skipper spun the wheel over and swung the vessel up in the direction from which the shrieking calls for help were rending the sight-veiling pall.

"See anything, fellers?" bawled Winslow.

"Nawthin'!" came the answer in a growling chorus from the crowd clustered for'ard. For ten minutes more they see-sawed over the swells, then Jimmy Thomas's voice rolled down from nothingness aloft. "Come up, Harry! There's a steamer off t' starb'd. Looks t' me as ef she was sinkin'!"

The young skipper brought the vessel to the wind.

"Make th' tail rope fast!" he cried, then paused to listen.

Out of the fog came the shouts of men and the steady roar of escaping steam. There were screams as of frightened women. The continuous blare of the siren dwindled off to a feeble hiss and stopped.

"No more whistling," muttered Winslow. "Water's floodin' her fire-room. Engineer's opened the escapes. I'm thinkin' there's women out yonder. Women? By th' Lord Harry!" As if he had not realized it before, he cried to Henderson who was standing mutely by: "I wonder ef that's a coal boat or one o' them passenger craft. ——! Git th' dories over th' side! There may be folks drownin' while we're standin' by an' listenin' to their yells." Cupping his hands to his mouth, he roared: "Dories over, fellers! Pull out an' see what ye can do. Take torches with you. Lower away, starboard dory!"

IN LESS time than it takes to relate, ten double-trawl dories with their crews were pulling into the void of fog in the direction from whence the shouting came. From the schooner the luminous glare of the torches could be seen for a few minutes after the boats had been swallowed up in the mist, and when that disappeared the three men on the vessel's decks strained eyes and ears for sight or sound. All around lay the impenetrable blanket of the Bank fog and the gallant schooner lifted and lurched to the long swell surging over the shoal ground of La Have.

The cook from amidships was the first to hail.

"Here's a boat a-comin'!" he cried excitedly, and following his hail a ship's quarter-boat bumped alongside. The skipper jumped to the rail and the flaming torch he held in his hand illuminated the pale, panic-stricken faces of a number of men.

"What's th' trouble out yonder?" queried Winslow. "What vessel are ye from?"

A pig-faced fireman in grimy dungarees and with a sweat rag around his neck looked up and replied:

"We're th' Northern Coast liner *Alcestis* from Halifax t' New Yoick. Some blighter run us down an' she's sinkin'!"

"The *Alcestis!*" cried the skipper. "Holy Sailor! Any passengers aboard?"

The man hesitated curiously and Winslow noticed the look on his face in the sputtering glare of the torch.

"Any passengers aboard?" he repeated with a menacing harshness in his voice.

"Ay!" answered the fireman hoarsely. "I guess there were some."

"Where are they?" The fishing skipper's tones were harsher than before.

"We dunno," snarled a member of the black squad shivering in his scanty clothing. "Let's come aboard. God! we're freezin' out here!" Winslow glanced over the sullen, yet appealing faces in the boat.

"Cast their painter off!" he roared to the cook. "They're a —— lot of bunker-cats who've rushed th' boat an' saved their own dirty skins! White-livered swabs! Back you go, blast ye, an' get some o' th' passengers ye ran away from, or I'll leave ye to drown as ye did the others!"

The pig-faced fireman, with a vicious oath, made a jump for the rail, but as he made the spring Winslow smashed him between the eyes with his fist and knocked him back sprawling over the quarter-boat's thwarts.

"Sheer off now an' get some of th' people ye ran away from, or I'll draw away an' run ye under——"

"Dory on the starb'd!" yelled Logan, and out of the mist came Number Four dory loaded down to within an inch of her gunnel with a crowd of people. Jimmy Thomas,

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pulling the dory's bow oar, cautiously hove the painter aboard and the cook caught it, while Winslow stood in the waist and grabbed the rescued persons, most of whom were women and children, as the dory rose on a sea.

"By th' Great Trawl Hook!" ejaculated Logan when the dory was discharged. "Ain't that a dory load? How many? Two men, six women, four kids an' Thomas an' Jackson. Sink me ef I iver saw fourteen in an eighteen-foot dory afore! An' here comes Henderson with as many more, by th' Lord Harry!"

Dory after dory pulled out of the fog and, ranging alongside, perilously deep with their living freight, the rescued passengers were helped aboard. The schooner's decks were crowded with them. Women in silken kimonos, half dressed as they had rushed from their berths; and men, barefooted and in pajamas. Children were crying pitifully with the cold, and mothers were endeavoring to quiet their fears with reassuring words. Winslow was bewildered for the nonce and stood gazing at the mob illuminated in the glare of the torches.

"What in th' deuce am I agoin' to do with this crowd?" he murmured in amaze. "An' th' gang has pulled back for more on them!"

A CLEAN-BUILT young man, barefooted and in shirt and trousers, elbowed his way through the huddle of rescued people and approached the fishing skipper.

"Excuse me, sir," he said. "I presume you're the master of this vessel. I'm one of the passengers off that *Alcestis*. Can I help in any way?"

"Why, yes!" answered Winslow. "I cal'late some o' th' women an' kids sh'd be got below and inter th' bunks. Some of them are wet an' cold, but Lord save us! there ain't much room in a fishing vessel. Wait a second! Hey, cook!"

"Ay, skipper!" replied that worthy from the midst of the crowd.

"Git plenty coffee on an' some kind of hot grub. Hustle now! An' you, sir"—turning to the young man at his side—"you might git th' ladies an' kids below deck and inter th' bunks. There's seventeen bunks for'ard and eight aft, so fill yer crowd with coffee an' grub and arrange 'em fore an' aft accordin' to your judgment. No men to be berthed with th' skirts, mind, so ye'll have t' cram as many women in th' foc'sle as it'll hold." And having prescribed the fishermen's remedy for all ills of the sea, Winslow hailed some of the men passengers: "Say, you men from th' steamer! There's a quarter-boat with a bunch of coal-shovelers alongside here."

"The scoundrels!" cried a little gentleman clad only in pince-nez and pajamas. "They rushed the only boat we could swing out and pulled away in it—" And he paused in a fit of shivering.

Winslow grunted. "I cal'lated they'd done somethin' like that. See that they don't come aboard. Let 'em swing aft an' we'll tow them, th' dirty ash-birds! I've a darn good mind t' cut 'em adrift an' let 'em pull for th' land. Here come th' dories! Stand by, Bill! Some o' you gentlemen catch th' dory painters an' help th' people aboard."

In the light of the torches the rescued were hauled over the rail and the women and children among them hurried below into the foc'sle.

"All aboard, skipper!" bawled Thomas above the buzz of excited voices and semi-hysterical cries.

"H'ist th' dories aboard! Let that ship's quarter-boat tow astern. Is that steamer's skipper there?"

A grizzled old man in soaking uniform detached himself from the shivering mob.

"I'm him, sir," he said dejectedly.

"How did it happen?"

The other shook his head.

"I don't rightly know," he answered dismally. "I saw your lights an' sheered off, then I h'ard the other fellow's whistle and saw his green light showing to port. It was up to him to keep clear of me. I rang my craft down to stop and the other vessel tried to clear me but he was too close and he banged into me jest for'ard of th' bridge deck. After he sheered off we examined our damage and it didn't appear to be much, so the other fellow, who was standing by, said he was making water and going to steam for the land, and it was only when he disappeared in the fog that the firemen came from below and said the water was rising over the stokehold floor. We then tried to get the boats out, but you know the condition of coasting vessels' boats—seams open an' jest covered with paint—and when we did get one swung out, the ash-cats rush-

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ed it and cleared out. I sure reckoned it was all day with us until your brave fellows came alongside and took us off."

"How many d'ye cal'late we have aboard here?" interrupted Winslow. "Is everybody saved?"

"Ay! We got them all clear, thank God!" replied the captain. "There's sixty passengers and thirty-five of a crew including those —— swabs towing astern."

"By th' Lord Harry!" cried the fishing skipper in perplexity. "That makes over a hundred souls aboard here—a hundred an' eighteen to be exact!" The young passenger who had been detailed to look after the women and children now stepped up. "I've got all the women and kids below, skipper. Some of them are in the bunks and we've fixed up shakedowns on the floor for others. We have thirty women and children there and I'm putting eight kids into the cabin bunks. The poor little devils are only half clothed. There'll be plenty of room in the cabin for any of the men that want to go below."

"All right, good work!" Raising his voice, Winslow cried to the huddle of men around the decks: "Any of you fellers, barrin' th' steamboat's men, that's cold for want o' clothes kin git below in th' cabin here. Ef there's any clothes down there that ye kin wear, help yourselves. I'll git coffee an' grub sent around jest as soon as th' cook kin make it. Clear th' decks now, please! Jimmy and Bill! Git th' riding sail out th' locker. Th' steamboat men kin rig a tent out of it between th' dories. It'll all help."

Glancing around at the wreathing mist which still enveloped them, the young skipper made up his mind quickly. The water in the schooner's tanks was getting low; there was a hint of windy weather in the air, and with such a crowd aboard there was but one thing to do, and that was to make the land as quickly as possible.

II

SOUTHEAST HARBOR, the nearest port, was sixty miles away, and after taking a cast of the lead for a point of departure, Winslow swung the vessel off for the land, west by north, with a light breeze blowing over the starboard quarter.

"H'ist balloon an' stays'l, fellers!" he sang out, and elbowing their way among the crowd of men who thronged the decks the fishermen set the light sails and sheeted them down. Handing the wheel over to Jimmy Thomas, the skipper stepped down into the cabin, which was crowded with a number of gentlemen passengers clad for the most part in shirt and trousers. A huge pot of coffee was on the stove, and from out of cans and graniteware mugs stock-broker, merchant, lawyer, capitalist and clerk sipped the hot brew with satisfactory smacks.

In the cabin bunks lay a number of little children rolled up in the men's gurry-smelling blankets fast asleep and totally oblivious of the hum of conversation buzzing around them. "Poor kids!" said Winslow as he glanced at them. "They've had a hard night."

As he took down a dry pair of mittens from the hook rack above the stove a stout gentleman, ludicrous in a striped pajama jacket, a sleeping-cap and a pair of oilskin trousers, spoke to him.

"You're the captain of this fish-smack, sir?"

"Of this *fishing vessel*, sir!" corrected Winslow.

"Humph!" grunted he of the sleeping-cap. "How far are we from the nearest land?"

"'Bout sixty miles."

"When d'ye reckon we'll get there?"

"Waal, that's hard to say. This ain't a steamer, but I sh'd say ef th' wind 'll come away a little more, we sh'd make Southeast Harbor by nine or ten in th' mornin'. Ef I meet a steamer, I kin transfer you, but th' weather's still thick and there ain't much chance of seeing anything until we raise th' land."

"Yes, yes, I know," said the little gentleman impatiently. "Do all you can to get us ashore as quickly as possible. I'm sure I'll have an attack of rheumatism after this and the smell of this hole makes me feel sick already. Make your smack—I mean fishing vessel—sail as hard as possible."

Winslow smiled meaningly to himself as he glanced at the barometer.

"Twenty-nine an' nine-tenths. Falling." Turning around to the crowd huddling the stove and swilling coffee and eating doughnuts he said: "Make yourselves comfortable. If you want anything, sing out, but don't come up on deck." And

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amid their profuse thanks he left them.

On deck again, Thomas called his attention to the fact that it was breezing up. "An' she's purty deep, Harry. What with th' fish we have an' this crowd aboard, I'm thinkin' she's goin' t' be a trifle wet ef it starts blowin' any."

"I know it, Jimmy," said the skipper with a laugh, "but there's a stout old guy in th' cabin there who wants us to drive this fishing-smack—that's what he calls this able vessel—as hard as possible. He says th' cabin smells bad."

"Lord!" grunted Thomas. "We'll drive her, never fear, an' when she starts her caperin' around, th' cabin'll stink a —— sight worse than it does now. Ha! ha! Wait till th' bilge gets stirred up. How's th' glass?"

"Dropped a tenth."

"Humph!" Thomas bit off a chew. "I'm afraid, Harry, she'll smash up somethin' around decks ef it breezes up. She's powerful deep. There's lee an' weather water sluicin' through them scupper-holes an' there ain't a puff yet."

"I've been thinkin' of that, Jimmy," replied the skipper slowly, "an' I cal'late we'd better git th' gang busy heavin' out th' fish. Ef they kin git th' for'ard pens empty, it'll bring her up by th' head an' lift th' weight in th' foc'sle." Turning around to the crew lounging around the house and talking to the officers of the *Alcestis*, he cried: "Git th' hatch off, fellers, an' pitch out all th' fish in th' for'ard pens. I hate t' heave good fish over th' side, but we'll have t' do it. It's breezin' up."

WITHOUT a murmur the men started in, and soon basket after basket of fine cod, haddock, hake and pollock were being reconsigned to the element they were taken out of, while the schooner headed lazily on her course. The young New Yorker who had proved such an able lieutenant in making things comfortable for the women and children watched the action of the fishermen with strange feelings and entered the cabin.

To his fellow passengers he related what the fishermen were doing and added:

"It's pretty hard on these men to have to throw away their catch like this. God knows, they earn their living hard enough, and I say it's up to us to make good their loss as soon as we get ashore."

The stout party in the nightcap waved his hand with a short gesture of finality.

"Don't worry about that, my friend," he said pompously. "I'm a lawyer, and I'll make it my business to squeeze that steamship company for a sum that'll more than pay these fishermen for their loss. I've got a case against that company with their rotten life-boats—criminal negligence, I call it. These fishermen will be compensated—*æquitas sequitur legem*—so say no more about it."

By three in the morning the wind stiffened and the fog was wreathing and reeling around in smoky gusts. Under her four lowers, balloon and stays'l, the schooner snored through the inky water with the lee-rail scupper-holes squirting jets of foam half across the deck. Astern lurched the quarter-boat with ten very miserable members of the steamship's fire-room. Coffee and food had been passed out to them, but their plight was by no means enviable, for as they rode at the end of their painter they were drenched in the chilly spray and it was only by continual bailing that the boat kept afloat. Many times they implored to be taken aboard, but Winslow referred them to their own skipper, and he, a "Downeaster" of the old school, cursed them with lurid deep-water oaths and told them to "freeze and be ——!"

In the forecastle, dimly illuminated by two oil-lamps, John the cook sweated over the stove brewing tea and coffee and stewing a "whale of a chowder"—it takes a long time for one man to prepare food and drink for over a hundred people—and in their bunks and on the lockers and floor women and children of all degrees in social status consoled one another or lay mute in the miseries of seasickness. Mrs. Stuyvesant Hopkins, a well known New York society woman, wrapped in a gurry-covered oilskin coat, conversed with plain Jessie Teebo bound for service in Brooklyn, and both sipped coffee from the same battered enamel mug.

Miss Anette Schiller, artist and literary woman, washed cups and plates at the galley sink and evoked the cook's admiration by the way in which she accomplished her self-imposed task in spite of the lurching and rolling of the vessel. In a noisome peak bunk, lately occupied by "Fishy" Williams—a fisherman who was by no means particular whether he turned in in slime-covered boots and oilskins—Mrs. John H.

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Potter, the wife of a stock-broker and the leader of an exclusive Newport clique, lay rolled in the aforesaid Fishy's blanket, detestably seasick. Muriel Wilson, a pretty Vassar girl with suffragette ideas and homeward bound from a vacation, assisted in passing around cups of coffee and in drying the sodden underwear of a number of her fellow passengers.

If John the cook hadn't been a married man, he would have felt highly embarrassed by the delicate position he was in. Winslow, in a tour of inspection for'ard, glanced around the foc'sle and saw that things were as comfortable as it was possible to make them aboard a fishing vessel.

"I'm afraid there'll be trouble here in a little while," he muttered as he passed the cook.

"How?" queried that worthy.

"Wind," replied Winslow laconically, and the cook understood.

As the vessel hauled off the Bank the wind increased to a fresh breeze and under the press of sail she dived and lurched into the seas with smashes that sent the spray flying over the decks. Amidships a crowd of men—officers, engineers, stewards and deck-hands—huddled under the riding-sail stretched across the space between the dories and smoked, chewed and cursed with seamanlike philosophy. Filled up with coffee and food, they were unceremoniously told to remain where they were, and sailor fashion they obeyed orders and growled as the flying spray flew over their improvised shelter.

Stepping down into the cabin at four, Winslow noted a further fall of one-tenth in the barometer. The wind was rising; the tide was backing against it; and the vessel was commencing the antics peculiar to fishing schooners when they are being driven, while the nauseating smell of disturbed bilge-water—fishermen's bilge-water, the kind that has sulphuretted hydrogen hull-down for aroma—was permeating the atmosphere below decks. Many of the passengers had succumbed to the pitching and the bilge-water and laid in grotesque contortions upon floor or locker, ashen-faced and horribly sick. The legal gentleman was perspiring and white looking and in a nervous voice asked the young skipper if there was any way of alleviating the existing conditions.

"Gentlemen," replied Winslow decisively, "there is only one thing I can do. I've got to get this vessel into port in the quickest possible time, even if it blows a gale of wind. The water in our tanks is gone—the cook has used it all in making tea and coffee for you people. We fishermen had to drink melted ice off the fish for our coffee jest now, an' it don't taste nice. With women aboard I can't keep this vessel at sea an hour longer than I can help, so if you are sufferin' any discomfort jest remember it won't be for long, and you'll oblige me by stayin' below deck. We're doin' our best." And he swung up on deck again.

III

THE rescued passengers of the *Alcestis* are never likely to forget that drive for the land, nor will Captain Harry Winslow and the crew of the *Isabel Winslow*. The wind piped up to a stiff breeze and under all sail and bucking against the tide the schooner stormed hotfoot for Southeast Harbor with a roaring bone in her teeth. The weather was as thick as mud and called for extraordinary vigilance on the part of Winslow and his crew as they drove through the clammy veil. Three or four oilskin-clad forms lolled over the windlass and the anchor-stock peering ahead through the mist and driving spray, while aft Winslow and Thomas hung to the wheel and tried to ease the vessel as much as possible in her wild lurches.

With sheets started and boom over the quarter the schooner made conditions below decks a state of refined misery for the passengers. The lurching and pitching, the thunderous crashes of the sea on the bows, began to imbue the women in the foc'sle with a feeling bordering on panic, and John the cook was quick to notice the feeling. *Crash!* would go her bow into a surge, the starboard anchor-stock would thump against the side and the jumbo fetch up on the traveler with a sudden shock. Children began to wail in fright and women sobbed hysterically with fear and seasickness. John sang all the songs he knew with the laudable endeavor to calm the nervous women, and as he pottered around the reeling foc'sle the ladies were highly edified by the exploits of "Captain Billy Bester of the Seiner *Mary Ann*."

Flying on the wings of the wind, the vessel began to pull over the shoal water of Rose-

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way Bank, and bucking the tide on shoal water with a breeze of wind driving her under all sail there was the devil to pay and no pitch hot. The gang speedily left the windlass lookout and took to the rigging; the survivors camping amidships huddled in the dories and on top of the booby-hatch to get clear of the boarding seas, and Thomas and the skipper lashed themselves to the wheel-box.

"Look out for yourselves!" bawled Winslow above the din. "She's goin' t' be wet for a spell!"

And she was. *Swash!* Down went her long bowsprit into a roaring comber and coming up she scooped it aboard wholesale. Tearing along the deck, swirling drawbuckets and loose ends of gear in its path, it finally sluiced over the taffrail. *Swish!* She side-licked a cresting greenback and, shuddering to the shock, sent the spray flying like rain. Up and down, staggering, trembling, lifting and heaving, the gallant vessel surged and stormed along through the rip like an express train and made the water fly.

Below decks it was "hell fur sartain," as the cook afterward remarked. The bilge-water was going full blast and the lamps were beginning to burn blue; the passengers were being heaved about like peas in a pod and the cabin resounded with the curses of men and the foc'sle with the screams and howls of frightened women and children. *Crash!* Down the foc'sle scuttle came an avalanche of green water, and, swirling and sputtering around the stove, it would only drain away to be followed by another one. The Vassar girl, unaffected by seasickness and with her suffragette notions, scornfully chided the weaknesses of her fellow passengers, and for a while kept them in hand.

AFT in the cabin there was trouble of a similar nature. Nervous men insisted on coming on deck to avoid being poisoned by the bilge reek or burned by being hove against the stove, and Winslow left the steamship's captain to deal with them. This he did with a diplomacy which was surprising in such a rough old sea-dog, and with his body jammed in the companion he practically bottled the inmates of the cabin up while he regaled them with anecdotes of his own experiences.

"Why, —— me, 'tis impossible to sink these fishin' vessels. They're reg'lar submarine boats, that's what they are, an' I'd sooner ride out a blow in a craft like this than in th' blame steamer we jest got clear of. This ain't nawthin' but a light breeze. Shippin' awful seas, ye say? Pah! There's only a bit o' spray flyin' an' bein' a small vessel ye feel it more. Heavens! When I was win'jammerin' in clipper ships we'd bury our bows under until th' solid green 'ud fetch up agin th' break o' th' poop, an' we'd be scrapin' paint in that an' think nawthin' of it. Why, Lord save ye! I've bin runnin' the Eastin' in a bark an' never saw th' deck for four weeks. We had t' sleep an' eat in th' bight of a rope or th' belly of a clewed-up mains'l. We couldn't git inter th' foc'sle, an' by th' Lord Harry! every mother's son of us got fat on it!"

Winslow laughed silently and spoke to Jimmy Thomas at the lee wheel.

"Ain't that old mossback a prime yarn spinner? Whoop! Look what's comin'. Come aboard! Hang on, Jimmy! Gee! that was a blinder an' no error. Here's another!"

The vessel buried her whole port bow into a comber and in the foc'sle everything fetched adrift in the cook's racks. In the thunder of the sea and the crash of breaking crockery and clattering tins a dozen women jumped from floor and bunk and made a frantic rush for the ladder.

"We won't stay down in this place to be drowned!" they screamed as the cook barred the way, and for a few minutes John had an exciting time pushing them off. Screaming hysterically, they rushed him time and again, and the poor man, not knowing how to handle women, yelled for help. It was to Winslow the call was passed, and handing the wheel over to Jackson he picked his way for'ard. Glancing down the scuttle, he saw John trying to fend off a dozen frantic women who screamed at him in incoherent words.

"I don't wonder at them being frightened down there," he muttered, "but they're safest where they are." Calling down to them, Winslow told the panicky females that there was no cause for alarm, but they wouldn't believe him.

"You're trying to drown us!" they cried, and Winslow made up his mind.

Running aft to the gurry-kid he pulled a formidable bait-knife out of the becket and arriving back at the companion again

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roared in the harshest voice he could assume: "Stand from below, John! I'll fix them!" And he jumped down the ladder with the gleaming bait-knife in his fist.

This, together with his dripping oilskins and unshaven face, blackened with torch smoke and with a streak of bloody gurry across his cheek, made him look a fearful object. The knife, too, was stained with blood — herring blood — and that was enough. Whimpering in fear, the hysterical women recoiled to the farthest corners of the foc'sle and listened in abject terror to Winslow's voice. "Th' first woman that comes on deck without my permission will be—waal, I won't say what I'll do, but stay where you are if you value your lives!"

Vivid and distraught imaginations pictured the ugly looking knife plunged into their hearts—Ugh! It was stained with blood already! Winslow left them quietly resigned to the terrors of the early morning and made his way aft again.

"Women kickin' up a racket?" queried Jimmy Thomas, as the skipper took his place at the wheel.

"Ay!" growled Winslow. "They're frightened, an' t' keep 'em from rushin' on deck I had t' scare 'em worse. I'm sorry for them, but things are easin' off now. We got clear of Roseway."

For another hour they stormed along through the mist with the dull snore of the wind in the sails and the thunderous hiss of whitewater streaming aft and astern. The men on deck were feeling the cold and wet, while those below had fallen into a kind of apathetic doze, sprawled around on locker and floor.

"Light dead ahead!" came a sudden hail from the bows. "Hard down! Hard down!"

"Noxon Rock buoy!" ejaculated Winslow in surprise, as he and Thomas brought the vessel to the wind. "Holy Sailor! We must ha' bin slammin' her at some clip. Main-sheet, some o' you! Trim your jibs! Sway her in! Down stays'l and balloon! We don't need 'em now."

Close-hauled, the schooner bore up for Southeast Harbor ten miles to the W. N. W. and the reeling buoy marking the dangerous Noxon Rock swung past the port quarter but a scant cable's length away. The steamboat skipper in the companion opened his eyes.

"Ye're sailin' fine courses, skipper," he said. "That was a narrow shave!"

"For a steamboat, maybe," answered Winslow coolly, "but fishermen are used t' scrapin' th' paint off'n buoys."

AT DAYLIGHT, with the mist still eddying around her, the schooner slipped into smoother water. Though nothing could be seen but green sea for a radius of a hundred feet from the point of observation, yet Winslow knew he had fetched in the lee of Salvage Island, and instructed the watch for'ard to keep a lookout for the Southeast Harbor fairway buoy.

"Ye sh'd sight it on th' port hand, I cal'late," he said. "Keep yer eyes skinned for it, or by the Lord Harry, if we bring it on th' starboard we'll fetch up on th' Man o' War Rock!"

In the cabin his voice was distinctly audible and the male passengers forgot their sickness with the ominous import.

"Did you hear that?" cried the lawyer. "My God! This fish boat will be the death of me yet. If that skipper don't drown us with his sailing, he'll dash us on the rocks with his reckless navigation. I never spent such a night in all my life, and hereafter I'll always travel by train on my vacation trips. No more sea for me."

And others voiced his sentiments with half-scared heartiness. When the next hail came from for'ard, the inmates of the cabin blanched and waited for the inevitable.

"Buoy on starboard bow! Hard down!"

Coolly whirling the wheel over, the young skipper gave his orders as calmly as if he were navigating a yacht in broad daylight. "Let go yer jib sheet! Hands to th' main-sheet! Trim her down, fellers! Round she comes! Are we goin' to clear it?"

Bang! Bump! Thud! Coming around on her heel, the schooner side-wiped the big can buoy with her port quarter and it bumped protestingly against her side and careened in the eddy of her traverse.

"We've struck that rock!" cried the lawyer and he started up with panic written large on his face.

"Hah!" cried Winslow with a laugh. "We gave her a wipe that time. Th' Government'll need ter be paintin' that buoy again after I hit it a few more times. I'll write th' Department ter shift it outer my way. I cal'late we've got clear by now, so we'll swing her up for Clancy's Wharf. Ready there! Helm's alee! Round she comes! Trim yer sheets!"

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And this is the way they came up Southeast Harbor. Came up under sail in weather as thick as the inside of a tar-pot; dodging gaunt harbor spiles; scraping fairway buoys and maneuvering in a manner which caused the old steamship skipper and his officers to murmur their admiration of such reckless seamanship. Reckless in a way, but not so from the fishermen's point of view, for no men afloat know their beautifully modeled vessels better and none can handle them like the fraternity.

When a tug nosed out of the gloom and hailed them, she was declined with sarcastic gibes and her master stared with open mouth at the crowded decks.

"What's th' matter, skipper?" he called. "Where d'ye pick that mob up?"

"'Tis in the excursion business we are these days," replied Winslow facetiously. "Sheer off an' git th' folks ashore ready ter receive a crowd o' shipwrecked passengers —women an' children. Th' Halifax boat *Alcestis* was sunk in th' fog on La Have. Slide now, or I'll beat ye t' th' wharf!"

Ten minutes later they rounded up to the dock under foresail and jumbo and made fast, while a ship's quarter-boat manned by ten very wretched human beings sneaked into a wharf lower down the harbor.

IV

IT DID not take long for the passengers to get ashore. They needed no help. Pale-faced women stood on the wharf stringers and shook their fists at Winslow standing by the wheel. "Heartless brute!" "Wretch!" and "Callous Thug!" were some of the epithets applied to him. The lawyer was the first to reach terra firma, and once ashore he regained his dignity.

"Many thanks, captain," he said. "I'll communicate with you in Anchorville. Good-by!"

The young skipper waved a tired farewell and turned to find the Vassar girl and the young New Yorker coming aft.

"Captain Winslow," said Miss Wilson, with a wan smile on her pretty features, "I hope you won't think we're ungrateful, but I can not say enough to thank you for what you have done. Some of the ladies have been very uncomplimentary after what you have done for them, but they'll be all right when they get over their fright, and I'm sure they'll be very sorry for what they've said."

"That's all right, Miss," replied Winslow laughing. "We fishermen are not looking for compliments, an' th' mere fact that we were able t' rescue you an' land you all safe and sound is all th' thanks we want. I hope you'll soon get over th' shakin' up we gave you, but we were lucky in gettin' a light wind. Ef it had come away stiff at all, I'm afraid things would ha' bin worse."

And when they left Winslow turned to the gang: "Up on yer mains'l, fellers! Water's aboard, John? All right, stand by your bow lines!" And a few minutes later they were standing out to sea in the fog again. "Anchorville now, bullies, with only fifty thousand below. Th' smallest fare the *Isabel* has ever taken into port."

ON THEIR return from their next trip each man found a little package awaiting him at Clarence Dickey's office and while waiting to draw their shares the gang swapped problematical guesses on the cost of the cuff-links and stick-pins they contained. Winslow examined a diamond pin and a fine pair of binoculars with appreciation, but seamanlike favored the binoculars. "Th' stick-pin'll do for th' wife," he said laconically, then he reread the letter which accompanied them:

> The passengers of the late S. S. *Alcestis* desire to thank you and the crew of your fishing-smack for their services in rescuing them from a watery grave last month. The little tokens of appreciation are sent by the ladies, while on behalf of the men I am forwarding a draft for five hundred dollars to be divided among your crew. A check will be sent you shortly from the Northern Coast Steamship Company in payment of the fifty thousand pounds of fish jettisoned by you, and which I trust you will find satisfactory. On behalf of your late passengers, I wish you and the crew of your fish-smack the most cordial good wishes for the future, and beg to remain,
>
> Faithfully yours,
> JOHN HUFFIELD WOTHERSPOON,
> Attorney-at-Law.

"Humph!" grunted Winslow with a slow smile. "'Fish-smack,' he still calls th' able *Isabel*. Waal, I'll forgive him, for he an' th' ladies have come over handsomely. There's money in rescues, but no more for me, if there's women in them."

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Subjugating King Pete

By George Vaux Bacon

THE King and I have always been friends since, and I have always felt that if a king is only given a square deal, he will show up in the show-down to be a pretty good sort of chap, after all.

As my friend Tracey of the 125th British Regular Infantry, stationed in India, says: "It ain't the label that makes the booze," which is rough stuff and coarse, worthy only of a private in the ranks, but it shows that Tracey's investigations in life had borne some fruit, which is commendable in a man who was born in Nashville, Tenn., was shanghaied on the Barbary Coast and wound up in the British Army in India.

With the American's aptitude for travel and a personal dislike for cut-and-dried tours, I had started out around the globe and woke up with a start one pleasant broiling afternoon to find myself gulping curried rice and trying to work the amount of my passage home into rupees. Of course, therefore, I was in India; better still, I was in northern India, and to cap the climax, in Peshawur, and horrid as it may sound, bored to death.

If an Englishman in his own tight little isle is a snob, the Englishman in his colonies is something which his own language has not as yet been able to describe. Much as I have traveled, I am of that childlike, trusting disposition so common in the States, and my innocent advances on shipboard and on trains had been met with a glacial aloofness that even the combination of tart curry and burning sun could not quite drive out of the canyons of my soul.

Therefore, when a long, conventional Englishman with the drooping mustaches and the sad air which one is continually reading about, and which really exists in large numbers, after a half-hour stare, asked,

"Oh, I say, aren't you an American?"

"Yes, what are you?"

To my amazement the awful British stare relaxed, the glassy blue eyes grew positively intelligent, wrinkles appeared at the corners of the eyelids, the lips twitched under the sorrel and gray mustache—and he laughed.

"My dear fellow," said the Englishman between guffaws, "you are great, simply great. You come from a people who are the most adaptable in the world. Yet I could see the cold ice of British snobbery festering in the crannies of your being as you attacked that curry. Now I am just a scientist. Therefore I can not afford to stand on my dignity. In the last half-hour I have gotten enough material from watching you to write a treatise for the Royal Society on 'The American as a Traveler' that ought to create a sensation in Ethnological circles. It is my business to study

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men and to know them. I have been looking all over Peshawur for you. Now that I have found you, let us get down to business."

I gasped, and gazed at him helplessly. Never had I heard an Englishman talk so much about anything but the weather.

"You know," he continued calmly, ignoring my baby stare, "there is a real King over one of the wild tribes who infest that region politely attributed on the maps as being under the personal supervision of the Amir of Afghanistan, who is quite a character apparently, and is a systematic and clever fighter against the khaki-clad troops of his Imperial Highness George, Emperor of India."

"You interest me," I interrupted, unwisely, a nose for news carefully cultivated under a red-headed city editor in Cleveland, Ohio, beginning to itch expectantly.

HE WAS silent for a moment. I hastened to start him again. I had somehow or other roped in this Anglian biped, and got him started on a story of some sort that looked as though it were going to turn out to be a lulu.

"Look here, old man," I essayed, "I'll cut all comedy. I'm a newspaper man to whom a rummy handed a wad of kale with the injunction to travel through Asia and get dope on the political situation. I've picked up enough wild tales of international entanglements to drive all the magazine editors in the world to hari-kari and I've tested every beverage old Asia has to offer that I felt had no political significance. I feel that I am now in the Richard Harding Davis class minus ten for looks; but of kings I know nothing. Be merciful, and let me sit at your feet and hearken unto your little tale."

"It is easy to see," said the Englishman, "that you have both your native abilities to acquire grafts and to describe them gracefully. I am surprised that you are not Chairman of the Board of Directors of the United States Steel Corporation. You may listen to my little story; but you will be surprised to learn that I dug you up for the purpose of paying your expenses and enjoying your company in a little expedition on which I am going with a file of Tommies and a determined young subaltern to the interesting King's domain for the purpose of delivering the final message in affairs of state.

"I am what is known as a student of ethnology, and I'm going with this punitive expedition to gather some data on the manners and customs of the Afghan tribesmen for a treatise on the subject I am contemplating in the interests of the Royal Ethnological Society.

"I am in need of a white man to go with me and help out with the photographic paraphernalia. One of my boys told me you were in town and who you are. Every other white man around here is either too busy or too lazy to go with an old fossil of an investigator of human beings. You being an American, and therefore without sense, I thought I could persuade you to go with me. Will you go?"

Would I go? I almost fell on the old fellow's neck and wept.

Then we got busy, and that's how Sir Mortimer Cholmondeley, F. R. E. S., and myself joined the British column that went up into the Hills and over the Afghan border to put the kibosh on a revolt and subjugate the fighting King of the Azrani tribe.

We managed to buy service stuff from the commissary after much haggling and many waits for various O. K.'s from different quarters; but it seemed that the Royal Ethnological Society was a sort of an appendage to the Indian Government, and we got all we wanted in the way of an outfit.

The troops arrived on train in a couple of days, with a clean-cut young chap by the name of Hempsted in command.

We started one broiling morning, I carrying everything that Sir Mort couldn't carry, and I got my full dose of what the British Government expects from its soldiers in the way of marches. If you've ever taken a forced hike across an Arizona desert, or enjoyed life in the sweat and jungles of the Philippines, you've got an idea of the weather. The main difference was that the roads were magnificent.

Until we got over the Afghan line, we marched a full day from sunrise to sunset, steady tramp, tramp, tramp, the dust blowing away from under the men's boots across the fields on each side of the splendid military road, covering the green with gray, so that the rear guard marched through a country that looked as though it had been sprinkled with ashes out of a big saltcellar.

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THE beat of marching feet, the dull *clank-clang* of the accouterments, the occasional hoarse shout of command, passed in an undertone down the lines, the tanned faces under the white service helmets, the erect, soldierly figures and the thought that I was marching with the breed of men who had lifted their banner in triumph after the greatest fights history has ever recorded, over every quarter of the world, gave me a feeling of liking and respect for the race.

When we crossed the imaginary line that England has set as the boundary of her Indian dominions to the northwest, and crossed into the mountainous country that no one really knows who owns, the marches shifted, and we marched at night.

Those night marches through the Himalayan passes, with the snow gleaming far above me under a sky of stars that blaze such as no other stars I have seen in any other land, the thought that a lurking enemy were always watching in the darkness, the vastness of it, and the silence of the Hills that broods over all, gave me an idea of why the soldiers of northern India are a silent, valiant, efficient body of men who fight like devils, play like boys and act like men.

Sir Mort and I were marching at the head of the column, a little to the right, talking to Hempsted, about two o'clock one morning, when a single rifle flashed from the hillside, two hundred yards ahead of the column to the right. A Tommy to the left of me cursed savagely under his breath and dropped his rifle with a clatter. His right forearm was shattered with a slug made of a pounded nail.

Quick came a sharp command from Hempsted, and the stealthy swish through the ranks of fingered rifles, the *snick-snick* of breech-locks opened and snapped shut on cartridge-clips, the clear snap of set bayonets. Two or three other sharp commands followed, and in a twinkling the stars shone on a valley as deserted as when Nature made it, except for the occasional dull gleam of metal or bulge of a helmet behind a rock.

Sir Mort and I had got behind a large rock together, and he immediately began to improve the situation by telling me in a loud whisper how American Indian tactics were being used by the British Army against the Afghan tribesmen. "I shall have to write an article on the subject soon, for the Royal Society," he rattled on.

So did the King's tribesmen, for it became pretty clear by this time that the King had surprised us in spite of our night marches.

In fact, while the old fellow had been talking, the hillside opposite us opened up like a fireworks display, and the soft slugs whined and hissed and slapped on the rocks all around us. The Tommies held their fire for a while, then began shooting. Where I lay behind my rock I could see the flashes light up the faces of the men, lying on their bellies, firing slowly and carefully at the flashes across from them. Most of the Tommies had taken off their helmets, laid them upside down beside them on the ground and filled them with ammunition. I could see them dipping into them for cartridges from time to time.

This kept up till daylight. One man near our rock had been nipped in the head, and had rolled up into a funny little bundle, with a pool of blood on a flat stone beside him. I squirmed over to his rock and got his rifle with its fixed bayonet, and all the cartridges he had left, and squirmed back. Sir Mort and I had each a long service revolver; but I will always want a heavy stocked rifle for mine when there's a real shindy on.

AT DAYLIGHT we could see a mob of men on the edge of the hill above us, and I guess we all realized that we were in for it, and in for it good and plenty.

Now, our position was like this: We were in an oblong, barren valley, covered with loose boulders of every size. In the middle of the valley was a rocky knoll which could offer shelter to a good many men, and at each end were the passes, through one of which we had come into the valley, and through the other of which we should have left it, if that King and his woolly Afghans hadn't interfered.

It was a gloomy place. The sun was up long before we could see it down at the bottom of that trough. Nobody could light any fires or cook anything.

After the men had compromised on snatches of biscuit and water, and were in a humor from such a beastly breakfast that bodes ill for an enemy, the Afghans lit out from behind their rocks and went at us.

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"Thoughtful of them to have waited till after breakfast," said Sir Mort, and then the Tommies were on their feet and we were in it.

Volley after volley they gave us, and volley after volley we gave them back while they ran at us. I could see them jump in the air and fall on the ground here and there where our bullets struck in the black mass of the rush, like the little fishes in a run that leap up out of the water and fall back again. Their front was a double gleam of cold steel and hot rifle-fire. I leaned against the rock and pumped English cartridges into them till my fingers ached; but they hadn't ached long before I was right in the middle of a little affair that didn't give time for the use of modern weapons.

A big black devil swarmed around my rock with a grin and a sword that looked to me as though it were six feet long. I swung my rifle on him, and was so amazed I forgot to be excited, when I felt it go into the side of his jaw as though I had slapped a cheese with it, and he slopped over backward with a nasty place on his beard.

The next few minutes were so busy I didn't get a chance to keep shorthand notes of them. I know that I jabbed and swung, and jabbed and punched and gritted my teeth and smelt blood until in a dazed way I saw Hempsted come crashing through a rank of them with four or five tattered Tommies and, with a kind of grin, grab me by the sleeve and drag me and my rifle along with him.

After a brief blank I found myself squatting on the ground up on the top of the knoll, behind a rock, staring at a wide ring of khaki-clad backs that surrounded me, and realized that I was in the middle of a natural trench at the top of the knoll, at whose base we had been fighting, and that the Tommies whose backs I was gazing at, were very busy keeping rude barbarians from breaking into my meditations.

Some one tapped me on the shoulder. It was Hempsted, covered with dirt and blood and the remains of a uniform. In his right hand was a very serviceable-looking sword that seemed to have seen some use, and in his left was a revolver, out of which still curled a wisp of smoke. The sun suddenly came over the rim of the hills, and everything brightened, leaving him, to my dazzled senses, standing there in the day, a hero.

"My God, Hempsted," I said, "you fellows can certainly fight like ——!"

Hempsted threw up his head and laughed: "I've always given the Americans a lot of credit, Grenville, for being fighters; but I never could understand how you fellows beat us in your Revolution till I saw you pounding Afghans with an India Service rifle under the English flag and screaming rag-time tunes as though your life depended on them. When I got you, an Afghan had blooded you on the shoulder with his tulwar, and you had shouted 'Oh you kid!' at the top of your voice and bayoneted him through the lungs as did ever an Irish infantryman hot out of Cork."

And that's the second speech I ever heard an Englishman make about anything but the weather. At the same time I realized that my shoulder was very sore, and that while Hempsted had been dragging me up the knoll I had fainted, during which time the cut had been bandaged.

THE Afghan charge had been repulsed, and they satisfied themselves for the rest of the morning with a desultory rifle-fire.

Sir Mort was laid up with a knock on the coco that he had received during the charge down-stairs. I went over and found him rolled up in his overcoat with a couple of other coats for a pillow, a bandage around his head, writing busily on a neat little pad with a silver pencil. He heard me coming and looked up.

"I'm sorry I got you into this, Grenville," he said; "but I didn't expect anything like this. In fact, we expected a peaceful settlement."

"Forget it, Sir Mort;" I said, "I wouldn't have missed it."

I sat down and lit a cigarette and thought the situation over. Most of the Tommies were making coffee and getting some lunch while the rest kept popping away in answer to the Afghans' fire, which had grown less and less in earnest. It struck me that probably they were as interested in getting some lunch as we were.

Suddenly the shots ceased altogether, and I heard an Irish soldier talking loudly to a comrade. He ceased, and back came the answer, in the long, soft drawl that God never gave any human being living north of the Mason and Dixon Line in the U. S. A.

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I jumped to my feet and went over to the man.

"What part of the South do you come from, partner?" I asked.

"Nashville, Tennessee," came the answer, with a grin.

"Will you come along with me over to Lieutenant Hempsted a minute?" I asked. (They call it leftenant over there.)

"Sure, Mike!" came the answer; "I'll go anywhere with you-all."

An appreciative grin followed that told me Hempsted's story had got around, and the pride of my country that had wilted somewhat under the British stares of the months before, warmed in my heart, and I grasped my lanky fellow-countryman's hand with a grip, and walked over to Hempsted. He was squatting before a fire, drinking steaming coffee out of a tin cup.

"Excuse me for butting in, lieutenant," I said, "but I've got an idea."

"Great work, Grenville," he said, laughing; "what is it?"

"Do you think the King is up on that hill with his men?" I asked.

"I think so," answered Hempsted.

"Will you let me take this man and a flag of truce and have a talk with him?"

Hempsted stared.

"Well——"

"Oh, go ahead, Hempsted," I urged.

He objected to it on all the grounds that he could think of, saying that it "wasn't regular" and all that. As an outcome, though, my grinning friend from Tennessee and myself went down the side of the knoll with a flag of truce, and in a minute or two saw a corresponding party of two with another flag coming down the other side.

WE MET half-way, in an open place that was covered with bodies of Afghans and Tommies and was slippery and sloshy with red blood in a very horrid way. As we met, Sir Mort came dashing up with his pad and silver pencil, one end of his bandage flying behind his ear, and gasped out,

"I couldn't miss this, you know. Why in blazes didn't you tell me what was up?"

It was lucky he came. Friend Tracey from Nashville and myself stood around while he powwowed with the savage-looking angels of peace from the other side. Finally he turned to us and said,

"I've told them that you want to see the King, and they say he told them he wouldn't see anybody that couldn't whistle like this——" And by the holy cats of my aunt, one of those hairy devils began to whistle "She's Only a Bird in a Gilded Cage"!

After I had whistled the verses, and Tracey and I had whistled the choruses together, much to the amazement of Sir Mort, who was kept busy pushing the loose end of his bandage out of his eye and writing at the same time, we were marched ceremoniously up the hill, loudly whistling "She's Only a Bird in a Gilded Cage," while we could see the Tommies back on the knoll behind their rocks, rolling cigarettes, shooting craps, telling lies and indulging in all the other arts of peace during the lull of battle. Hempsted, evidently worried that he had let me go, was standing on a huge boulder staring at us through a field-glass. We were beginning to get a good ways off, so I turned and grinned at him and waved my hand. He waved back and kept on staring.

It occurred to me at that moment that opera-glasses must have been invented by an Englishman, they seem to fit so well.

When we got over the brow of the hill, a sight met my gaze that beats anything I ever saw in all my life.

You know these tribesmen believe that Alexander the Great was the greatest little scrapper that ever came over the pike, and they have a tradition that some day he is going to come back to them, reincarnated, and that he will be their leader forever afterward through long lifetimes of unending war and conquest, which is the Afghan idea of heaven.

Well, seated on a throne, all lit up in what I saw right off was a suit of splendid Greek armor, with a helmet all covered with red horsehair plumes, a long purple cloak over his shoulder, a short sword at his side, red tunic, sandals, scepter, everything that the text-books say is the real Greek stuff, was a powerful-lookin' chap with light hair, and a pair of lamps I'd hate to see on the other side of a pistol looking at me.

But believe me, what pretty nearly dropped me was the sudden conviction that that nose and jaw was mapped out somewhere between Syracuse, N. Y., and Brazos Valley, or all the physiogs I had ever studied lied like a Mexican pedler.

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I stepped up like a man in a dream, Tracey following me, and Sir Mort, busy with his note-book and staring at the king's costume with wide eyes, trailing behind. When we got well into the half circle of gentle creatures, loaded with pistols and knives, that surrounded the King, his royal highness and I exchanged looks. Then it occurred to me that in the excitement of the moment I had forgotten the brilliant idea that had got me to persuade Hempsted to let me come up to see the King. I was already beginning to feel a long slender blade insinuating itself up into my left lung, when——

"Who are you?" demanded the King, through his nose.

"I'm Mike Grenville of Kansas City, Missouri," I said with a start, but speaking up like a little man.

The King started at me from his throne, and I was waiting for the blow that would lay out the greatest writer America has ever seen, when the King hollered,

"By all the spikes in the U. P. from K. C. to Junc. City, put her here!" and reached out a hand like a ham with a grin that would have stopped New Mexico from entering the Union.

"Who are your friends?" he continued, pushing his helmet on to the back of his head.

"Mr. Tracey of Nashville, Tenn.," said I, pointing to Tracey, who looked like a man who's just swallowed a spider, "and Sir Mort, F.R.E.S., a scientist, but a good old sport."

The King shook hands with them and turned to me,

"Let your friends stick around awhile, Mike," he said, and dismissed the court, leaving Tracey and Sir Mort squatting on the ground, Sir Mort still writing on his pad, Tracey just beginning to wake up.

The King and I strolled over to the royal tent and had a drink.

WE STARTED chewing the rag right off the bat like long-lost friends. He told me his real name was Pete Erbacher, that he came from Wamego, Kansas, and had been out in Afghanistan looking for gold on a prospecting trip for some chap from Aden who heard there was metal in the Hills but didn't seem well acquainted with the political situation.

"The rest of the bunch were quietly killed," said the King, "being natives, mostly; but I got sore and kept on fightin' till the boys seem to have decided I'd make a pretty good king, got these old duds out of a cave where they'd been keepin' them for centuries, and here I am."

"Isn't it pretty dangerous to fight England?" I asked, handing the King a cigar.

"Gee, a fellow has to have some excitement, don't he?" replied the King petulantly. "I've got these other tribes around here so that they won't declare war on us at all. My men are the best shots in Afghanistan. I've got a royal sharpshootin' company of of a few Texas Irish back in the hills a ways that can plant a dime at a hundred yards. Say, who's President, anyway?"

"Taft," I said.

"Never heard of him," said the King thoughtfully. "We're stronger on war departments than we are on diplomatic corps around these parts."

The King and I went over things that had happened out around Kansas City for the last five years, at length. We hit on a few mutual acquaintances, and things warmed up. The King had some good stuff that he had copped from a former punitive expedition, and we had a merry old time. Tracey, being a common soldier and from Tennessee and also having the thirst that only the British Army in India can develop, was shortly stowed away.

Old Sir Mort got pretty well stewed, if I remember right, and got to calling the king an Ethnological Find to his face, which struck the King as so funny, I decided that we'd better invite Hempsted up for the fun.

"Gee, that's right!" said the King. "Say, what do you say we call this —— war off and have a hunting party? There's some fine game in the Hills, and we could have a devil of a good time up here among ourselves. The Indian Government would be tickled to death to think that I was subjugated inside of six months, anyhow, and Hempsted could get a lot of glory and some fun out of this expedition as well."

The upshot of it was that the King and I both sent down notes to Hempsted, and peace was concluded on the spot. Hempsted was tickled stiff at the thought of the hunt. We arranged a peace banquet to which the Tommies and the tribesmen were invited, with such good effect that they all awoke in the morning in one another's

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arms, with terrible headaches, but sworn blood brothers.

Between hunts we drew up a long treaty between Great Britain and the King, which stated that the Indian Empire made the King Military Guardian over the pass we had been fighting in.

"That'll give the boys all the fighting they want," said the King, as he affixed his royal signature that he learned at the Wamego, Kansas, high school, "and at the same time we won't be shooting any more of our own bunch. I never knew these Englishmen were such sports. Gee, Mike," he said, turning to me, "they're pretty near one of us, ain't they?"

And Hempsted had to admit that, coming from a King, that was some compliment.

WELL, we chased around with the King for a couple of weeks, and finally had to break away. He got awfully homesick when we left, and gave me a letter to his aunt in Emporia, telling her he had a good political position in India.

"I'm ashamed to tell her I'm a King," he said, with tears in his eyes. "She's a Presbyterian and would think I had gone to the dogs."

We had one more drink and parted.

As we marched away down the pass, amid the cheers of the Tommies and the answering cheers of the Afghans, I saw the King standing on a boulder, his red-plumed helmet all awry, wiping his nose with the skirt of his tunic, and waving an empty ale bottle after us.

When we landed back at Peshawur, Hempsted got some kind of a special recommendation or other that caused another celebration, and old Sir Mort wrote an article on "An American King in Afghanistan" for the London *Times* that was a hummer. When he got the dough for that, we decided that the King ought to get something out of it. We sent him up enough bonded goods by caravan to swamp an Emperor, let alone a King; but he wrote back in a couple of weeks and told me the tribe were thinking of moving from Afghanistan down into India, and would I kindly send up another quart of that stuff with the Denver label?

A day later, we got a whole lot of fine rugs and things from him by caravan, that I found out he had copped from a passing Armenian rug merchant, who had taken another pass, hating the English. Wind of these sentiments reaching the King, he had thus punished the man in the name of the Emperor of India.

"It's easy to see he is an American," said Sir Mort.

I hung around Peshawur for a while and then went over to Simla where I had a peach of a time on account of Sir Mort's letters of introduction.

When the rains came I got out and went home by way of Manila, and delivered the King's letter to his aunt. She asked me if I was advised as to whether or not he was wearing his woolen underwear in the Winter time. I told her it was always so hot where he was that the people wore the very lightest underwear.

I GOT a letter from the King in Chicago, a year later, saying he would land in 'Frisco a month from the date of the letter reaching me. I met him at the dock, and by the Great Brass Dog of Omsk, he had Hempsted and Sir Mort along with him!

We had a merry old time, and both Sir Mort and Hempsted went back to India at the expiration of Hempsted's furlough, swearing that all Americans were kings.

The night they left, the King kind of snuck up to my room at the St. Francis Hotel and confided,

"Mike, I'm going to quit. I've already appointed a King to succeed me. I've bought a farm out near Paxico, Kansas, with the royal tribute I levied out there, and I'm going to raise potatoes for the trade. Since I found what the Azrani expect in the way of a royal souse, and you fellows made gettin' it so easy, I'm afraid to go back."

"But you didn't leave your tribe without any King, did you?" I asked after telling him I thought that his idea was O. K.

"Oh, I got a Frenchman from Indo-China to be King, and gave the tribe a Constitution with the Irish sharpshooters from Texas as Senate and House of Representatives."

"I feel sorry for that King," I said.

And that's how the Indian Government and I subjugated King Pete.

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Dead or Alive

by W. Townend

A GREAT man has sung that "East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet."

Though not in the least wishing to decry Mr. Kipling's verse, which is beyond the criticism of ordinary mortals, nevertheless Howard B. Faulkner of New York City, which is a place in the East, met Jake Harrison of San Bernardino County and the West generally. They met in the State of California, which also is of the West.

But, as Mr. Kipling had in mind a different East and another West altogether, it is perhaps not quite fair to hold him responsible for a confused terminology.

Faulkner was a very young gentleman who had been extravagantly educated and carefully nurtured by fond and foolish parents. He was straight-backed, sound of wind and limb and pleasant-spoken; moreover he was clever—so people had told him—and he appreciated his own worth. In addition he cherished high ideals as to life, derived from a long and complete study of contemporary fiction. He believed in his ideals implicitly, and no one had ever pointed out to him the error of his ways.

Mr. Howard B. Faulkner knew everything worth knowing, and came out to "do" California, filled with a slight contempt for all men and all things west of civilization, or in other words, west of his native State.

Later on, it so befell that he returned home in a chastened frame of mind. But note the curious part: Faulkner would have arrived back in New York, having learned absolutely nothing, had he not slid down a steep hill one August afternoon into the company of Jake Harrison, a plain man who had never had the advantages of a college education.

Faulkner had traveled extensively throughout the Continent of Europe; he had even penetrated as far as Egypt, the Holy Land, Algeria and the British Isles, putting up everywhere at the very best hotels and always meeting the very best people, for he could afford to be exclusive in his tastes.

Jake Harrison, on the other hand, had never been farther east than Winslow, Arizona, nor farther north than Red Bluff, Tehama County.

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Faulkner had his clothes made by a most excellent tailor in New York, while Jake commonly wore an old blue flannel shirt and corduroy trousers, with a most shockingly dilapidated hat; nor had he ever possessed a dress-suit in his life.

From these few details, it is obvious that Faulkner was Jake's superior in every essential respect.

Whence the following absurd tale:

FAULKNER climbed over a fallen pine, lowered himself tenderly down a six-foot drop, wriggled through a patch of dense undergrowth, oblivious of rattlesnakes, slid twenty yards with a small avalanche of gravel and stones, cut his cheek on a sharp branch, clutched at a sapling to steady himself, and finally emerged on a trail on the hillside, hot and tired and dirty, but happy notwithstanding.

He stood on the edge of the trail, and stared out over the tree-tops across a wide valley at the mountains opposite, big, bare rocks, yellow and red-brown in the blaze of sunlight, veined with purple shadows, rising above dark-green forests and all against a sky of turquoise blue.

Faulkner breathed deeply of the warm, pine-scented breeze and laughed as he let his eyes wander from point to point. The spell of the mountains gripped him and he asked himself deliberately why he, to whom all things were possible, might not dwell forever and ever amid such surroundings, far and far from man and man's handiwork, uncontaminated by the strife and turmoil of the cities.

And rather pleased with himself for having such fine thoughts and determining to put them into writing at the very first opportunity, he turned to walk down the trail which would, he trusted, lead him somewhere or other. For, setting poetry aside, he was hungry and thirsty, nor had he a desire to spend a night on a mountain, however beautiful.

"Howdy!" said a quiet voice.

When you are firmly under the impression that you are five thousand and more miles from your nearest neighbor it is unsettling and bad for the nerves to find him almost at your very elbow, watching you closely.

Faulkner was somewhat taken aback. He reddened and opened his mouth without finding anything to say worthy of the occasion.

"Er—good evening!" he mumbled.

A leather-faced man with a grizzly mustache and a square jaw nodded at him in a friendly manner.

"Evenin'!" he said. "Been watchin' yuh quite a while. Guess yuh didn't hear me."

Faulkner regained his composure.

"I came down the hill here," he said, and then paused.

The brown-faced man whose eyes were the same color as the sky looked at him curiously. Apparently, the scrutiny satisfied him, and he spoke again.

"Harrison's my name; Jake Harrison."

Faulkner felt vaguely at a disadvantage.

"Pleased to meet you, Mr. Harrison. Faulkner's my name."

They shook hands solemnly.

"I'm from the East," said Faulkner.

He wanted this man in the blue shirt and gray waistcoat and shabby corduroys, with the leather holster at his thigh, to understand once for all, that, though dirty, Howard B. Faulkner was not as other men were.

"I know yuh ain't from the West," said Jake with a chuckle. "But don't let that worry yuh any. Come an' have some cawfee."

HE LED the way down the trail to a hollow scooped out of the side of the hill, where a philosophical pony, hitched to a buckboard, munched alfalfa hay, and a tiny fire crackled under a blackened coffee-pot.

So the tall, smooth-cheeked young Easterner and the man of the West sat side by side on the pine-needles, drank coffee out of tin mugs and talked of men and things as they had seen them.

"I walked over from Pixley's Gap," said Faulkner. "That's quite a distance, hey?"

"Yuh betcher," said Jake politely.

Jake had, of course, his own ideas as to distance. But then he never walked a yard if he could ride, nor would he ride if he could sit at his ease in his buckboard.

"I'm expectin' a feller here; friend o' mine," he continued. "He was to have been waitin'. Guess he ain't goin' to show up."

"Care for a cigarette?" said Faulkner, holding out a silver case, and all unconscious of the unforgivable vice.

"No," grunted Jake sourly, and his expression was one of disgust, not unmingled with intense pity. With much ostentation

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he hauled a small tobacco-pouch out of his pocket. "I chews."

He watched Faulkner light his cigarette. "Good boy!" he said, when that task was completed.

"Hey! What's that?" Faulkner was not quite sure whether he approved of being spoken to in this fashion.

"Well, I see yuh ain't gotten the habit of flingin' lighted matches around promiscuous, that's all."

"No! Why should I?" said Faulkner. He blew a succession of smoke-rings. "When I first started smoking I burnt a hole in my coat sleeve; that's why."

Jake spat reflectively.

"Gee! I thought yuh might 'uv burnt a forest down in the course o' your wanderings. Say! What yuh think o' this part o' the world?"

"Great!" said Faulkner, with unexpected enthusiasm. "Just great! I've traveled all over the East and Europe, and I've been in Africa and heaps of other places, but I've never yet seen anything to equal California. No, sir, that's an honest opinion. Look at these hills and trees and that sky! Switzerland isn't in the same picture! And it's scorching hot, but I don't feel it in the slightest. In New York, now, I'd be dead. I'd like to live here by myself, far away from——" He broke off suddenly, conscious that he was talking to a complete stranger, one, moreover, who wore a blue flannel shirt and corduroys and who was probably laughing at him.

But Jake did not even smile.

"I understand all right," he said. "I feel that ways myself—sometimes. I couldn't live anywheres but near these old mountains. Funny, ain't it? I've heard fellers in 'Frisco—I've an uncle thar' what owns a tugboat—I've heard fellers thar' talkin' about the sea just the same. They can't leave the sea, an' I can't leave the mountains. I allers come back to'm, 's soon 's I can."

FAULKNER felt that he had known Jake Harrison for many years. He suddenly decided that he liked him immensely, in spite of his tobacco-chewing and his clothes, both of which were horrible, and his grammar, which was an outrage.

"I want to tell you, Mr. Harrison," said Faulkner impressively, "that I'm sick to death of the cities and streets and newspapers and theaters and all the artificiality of modern existence. It's this open air and the sunlight and the mountains and woods that make a man want to live like a man. You couldn't do a mean thing out here, Mr. Harrison—"

"Most people call me Jake."

"— if you tried. No one could."

"Thar's men an' men," said Jake slowly. "Some fellers 'ud hold up Peter himself at the Shining Gates. An' I've met 'em, too. But I guess you'd find 'bout as good a bunch round here in the West as anywheres. We tries to give a man a square deal, and yuh can't do no better'n that." He pulled out a dollar watch and frowned. "Doggone it! What's come to Sam? I had a hunch all along something 'ud happen."

"Your friend late, hey?"

"Late! Yes, an' then some. I ain't locatin' in this spot permanently, and I gotter be hittin' the trail right now, Sam or no Sam."

"Could I help you out in any way?" asked Faulkner, lighting a fresh cigarette from the stub of the old one.

Jake eyed him for a moment with a distressed countenance, without answering. The shadows of the pine-trees stretched away up the hillside and the sun had reached the rim of the mountains opposite. He glanced at his watch once more.

"Well, perhaps yuh could. But I don't like draggin' a stranger into a mix-up like this. Sam's diff'rent. No, sonny, I can git along all right."

"I wish you'd let me take his place," said Faulkner eagerly. "What is it?" He scented excitement and action. "Hunting?"

Jake gave a dry little laugh.

"Yep."

"Hunting what?"

"J'ever hear of a man goin' by the name o' Black Murphy?"

Faulkner nursed his knees and considered.

"Black Murphy, hey? Yes, I have seen it somewhere or other. Oh! I remember, on a bill outside the post-office at Pixley's Gap. There's a reward out for a gentleman of that name, isn't there? I didn't read what he'd done, but—but——"

He looked at Jake with dawning suspicion. Jake chuckled.

"No, it ain't me. But it's Black Murphy

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that I'm hunting, Mr. Faulkner. So, now yuh know why I don't wanter take yuh along. I'll be paying Mr. Black Murphy a visit in 'bout half-an-hour's time, and he ain't exactly expectin' me."

"I'm ready," said Faulkner. "Why, I wouldn't miss this for fifty thousand dollars! Whereabouts is he? What do you want me to do?"

Jake smiled and shook his head.

"No, this ain't fer yuh!"

"See here," said Faulkner. "You were depending on some one else to help you. He's not here, but I am. I come along, of course, don't I? I'm strong and I can scrap as well as the other fellow, if that's what you're afraid of."

"Listen now, sonny, I'm warnin' yuh. Black Murphy's in Steve Brannan's old shack two miles up the trail. He's hiding. Came down from Kern County across the Mojave into San Berdoo, and out this ways. He's been up at Steve's for three days now, resting up; sick, mebbe. It don't matter how I knows this, or who told me, but he's thar' and I'm goin' to git him before dark, or I'm a Dago. See!" He unbuttoned his waistcoat and showed his silver star on the shirt underneath. "Dep'ty sheriff o' the county," and he spat calmly.

Faulkner jumped to his feet.

"I'm on!"

Without a word, Jake got up slowly, and gathered together the coffee-pot and tin mugs.

II

THEY drove up the rough trail, winding along the side of the hill between pines and eucalyptus and live-oaks.

"Are you going all the way in this rig?" asked Faulkner in an unnecessary whisper, as they skirted the brink of what seemed a more than respectable precipice.

He lit another cigarette, and wondered what would happen should the philosophical pony choose to go exploring in the chaparral below.

"Not quite, but purty nigh. The buckboard 'ull come in useful. Say, look at that gold light over thar' on the edge uh that high peak! Gee, that's fine! Like it was burnin'! J'ever see anything so peaceable? Somehow, I allers feel kinder solemn when the sun's 'long 'bout settin'. Allers been that ways, too, ever since I was a little bit of a kid."

Jake talked on in a low voice, chewing and spitting unconcernedly. Faulkner sat silent, nervous and excited at the thought of what might await them, smoking many cigarettes, smiling in sheer delight at the adventure, even debating in his mind the story as he would relate it when he reached home.

And, musing thus, he became aware that Jake was asking him a question.

"What's that?"

"I was just sayin' that I—well, it's funny how some things 'ull bring back other things. Now the smell o' the pines is allers liable to make me remember when I was a kid. An' the red an' yaller in the sky looks like it's Sunday and I'm 'bout eight or nine, eatin' my supper with the rest o' the bunch in the kitchen, with the door open an' the frogs croakin' down to the crik. An' nawthin' but a durned old shack! Dad was always goin' to build on, but somehow he kep' puttin' it off and puttin' it off, and—it's nawthin' but a durned old shack now, I guess, if it ain't fallen to pieces. The valley was open range then. Last time I saw it, it was all cut up into small ranches—chicken an' fruit an' dairy.

"But that little kitchen, doggone it, with the old lady settin' at the head o' the table an' dad readin' the paper! 'Now then!' she'd say, 'Bedtime,' an' then we'd git ready to pray. Gee, but if thar' was anything to laugh at, it 'ud come up then, 'long 'bout prayer-time. Often and often she had to stop in the middle o' prayin' that we'd sin no more in the future to clout us fer sinnin' right thar'. Everlastin' punishment havin' no terrors fer us! An' then we'd sing a hymn. Yes, siree, we useter.

"I remember one hymn she was fond of, and it gives me a sorter lonesome, homesick feelin' when I remembers it. Say, j'ever hear the hymn?"

He lowered his voice almost to a whisper, and as he crooned the verse, gazing across at the red of the sunset flaming behind violet mountains, a deep melancholy showed in his eyes:

> "Now the day is over, night is drawin' nigh,
> Shadders uh the ev'nin' steal across the sky.

"That's simple, ain't it? Just what kids like! And I wanter tell you, Mr. Faulkner,

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right now, that I've heard singers since, good singers, too, cracker-jacks, but the old lady had the whole crowd whipped to a frazzle. And I guess it was that teachin' an' hymns pulled me up when I was goin' crooked an' made me what I am—dep'ty sheriff o' the county. Yes-sir, that—an' my shootin' straight."

And Jake ended abruptly.

NEITHER of them spoke for some time; the pony picked its way cautiously up the trail, the wheels of the buckboard sinking into the soft pine-needles. The red in the heavens faded gradually to yellow and the trees and rocks and mountains across the valley became one wide sweep of blue.

"Thar's 'bout half-a-mile more," said Jake suddenly. "Now, sonny, this here's your last chance if yuh wanter back out. Black Murphy ain't a gent that you'd wanter have dealings with. You'd better wait in the buckboard an' smoke them durned cigareets o' yourn." And Jake again showed his scorn.

"Of course I won't back out!" said Faulkner indignantly. "I said I'd help you, and I'm not in the habit of going back on my word!"

"That's just all right, Mr. Faulkner; I knew yuh wouldn't, and I'm glad of it. Now, all yuh gotter do is to knock at the door o' the cabin. See! Twice soft, then once loud!"

"Is that all you want me to do?" said Faulkner, rather disappointed.

"Yep, that's all! He's expectin' that knock, an' he'll open the door to yuh. It don't matter who gen'rally knocks that ways, but what does matter is this: Just so soon as ever you've knocked at the door, skip to the left, *pronto,* an' round the corner as quick as your legs 'ull carry yuh."

"Why?" asked Faulkner, slightly puzzled at these elaborate details.

"In case of accidents," said Jake. "That's why, my son. Only do as I tell yuh, and I'll attend to Mr. Murphy."

LATER, they alighted and left the pony and buckboard on the trail. They walked softly through the darkening wood till they came to a ridge overlooking a little level space, where among the pines stood a small cabin.

The cabin had a sloping roof and a tin-pipe chimney from which came a faint smudge of smoke. On the right-hand side of the closed door was a tiny window across which hung a piece of gunny-sack.

The two men crouched down in the shelter of a clump of manzanita.

"Now, boy," whispered Jake, squirting out tobacco-juice. "We'll work round from this side toward the corner thar', then, remember, knock twice soft and once loud; then skip to the left."

Faulkner nodded.

Together they crawled on hands and knees down a small *arroyo,* covered by brush. When they were about twenty feet from the angle of the cabin, no more, behind a pine, Jake nudged Faulkner and strolled slowly into the open and halted.

Faulkner gulped, hesitated, then squaring his shoulders, walked swiftly toward the door with his heart thumping furiously and a singing in his ears.

He knocked, then, obeying instructions, turned and tiptoed to the left, wondering whether Black Murphy would resist arrest by a duly certified officer of the law.

As he rounded the corner he heard the door open, and immediately there followed the sharp *crack* of a revolver, a scream of rage or terror, and the unmistakable thud and clatter of a falling body, then a deep silence.

Faulkner cowered against the rough, unsurfaced logs, quivering all over. For a brief space his nerve left him. It flashed across his mind as a certainty that Black Murphy had shot Jake at sight through the half-opened door. Faulkner wanted to escape while there was time, but his legs refused to obey. Then, still shaking, he peered cautiously around the side of the house.

Jake Harrison, smiling, his jaws still moving as he chewed, was strolling toward the door, revolver in hand.

Across the threshold lay a man, face downward, with a small puddle of blood soaking into the earth!

FAULKNER leaned helplessly against the shack. A lump rose to his throat, he drew in his breath with a sob, and the black pines chased each other madly across the yellow sky, like the lighted windows of a train rushing by in the blackness of the night.

Jake turned the body over with his foot,

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steadying himself with one arm thrown against the door-post.

"Well, Black Murphy, you're finished, hey? Plumb through the forehead! I wonder what lies you're tellin' 'em now!"

Faulkner approached, swaying drunkenly.

"Good work, kid," said Jake. "I didn't hardly like to ask yuh to do it, but—say, what's the matter? Feelin' sick?"

For Faulkner was glaring at him with face white as chalk and terror in his eyes.

"You!" he said. "You!"

"That's all right!" said Jake. "Don't look at'm. It's the blood, hey?"

"You—you shot him—you shot him!" whispered Faulkner hoarsely, clawing at the wall.

"Yep," said Jake, not without pride. "Quick as ever he opened the door; plumb through the forehead."

"You shot him as he opened the door, before he had a chance to do anything, shot him like a dog, and I—I thought you were a white man, you hymn-singing hypocrite!" His voice rose to a shriek. "You—you murdered him!"

He stopped, sick with the horror of what he had seen. He clenched his fists and took one step toward Jake; one step, and no more. At first Jake stared at him with a bewildered smile and then of a sudden the smile vanished. He rubbed his chin with the long barrel of his Colt, shifted the tobacco from one cheek to the other, and spoke in a quiet tone.

"Son," he said, "cut it out, right now. Stop whar' yuh are! You've said more'n enough."

And there was something in his voice that made Faulkner obey.

"You an' me gotter see this through," continued Jake sharply. "Understand! Don't git playing any monkey tricks, neither, 'cause I won't stand fer it. Git that? Now go fetch the rig, while I have a look into the house. An' don't be all night about it!"

Faulkner staggered off.

He drove back slowly. Jake waited at the door with a bundle of odds and ends tied in a shirt.

"Take a-holt o' the legs," ordered Jake. "Git a move on! I'll take his shoulders."

Keeping his eyes averted from the upturned face, Faulkner stepped over the threshold. He choked down his nausea as he grasped the legs.

"Ready?" said Jake.

And together they raised the dead man and bore him to the buckboard.

Jake took his seat. The dead man was huddled in with the saddle, the sack of hay and the bundle, with his legs dangling limply over the tail-board.

"Git in," said Jake.

"No, thank you," said Faulkner. "I prefer to walk down by myself. In fact, I—I hope that I never see you again, Mr. Harrison. You may do to me what you did to that poor chap there—I don't care, but I tell you right now, to your face, that I've done enough of your dirty work, and——"

So far Jake had been very patient, but there is a limit to all things.

"Git in!" he roared. "—— yuh, yuh young fool! Git on, or——"

Faulkner climbed in by his side hurriedly.

On the long, weary drive down the dark trail with the breeze from off the desert stirring in the branches of the pines, and screech-owls hooting mournfully, Faulkner sat with his head bowed and his arms folded, thinking of the quiet man on the floor of the buckboard and the manner in which he had gone to his death.

And Faulkner knew that he hated Jake Harrison more than he had imagined one man could hate another.

III

AS THE moon rose behind the shoulder of the mountain they left the trees and passed through a narrow canyon, overgrown with cactus and prickly pear, into the valley.

Twenty minutes later they drove between tall blue-gum trees and pulled up in front of a straggling ranch-house, where a water-wheel creaked forlornly and dogs rushed out barking.

Jake raised his voice and shouted,

"Oh, Shorty! Oh you, Shorty! It's Jake Harrison."

The front door opened and an enormous man stood silhouetted against the light.

"Hello, Jake! Quit that barking, dog-bust yuh!" The dogs were growling uneasily. "Don't yuh know a friend? What yuh doin' this time o' night, Jake? I was just thinkin' uh bed."

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"Look what I gotten in behind here," said Jake.

The fat rancher waddled out of the house.

"What's come to them dawgs? Cut it out now!"

Faulkner made a movement to get down, but Jake put out a restraining hand.

"Wait!" he said, and turned round in his seat.

"It's a man!" said the fat rancher. "Drunk, hey? Who is it, Jake?" There was a moment's silence. Then, "Fer God's sake! Why, he's dead! Why, Jake—why, it's not—it's not Black Murphy, surely? Good God! You ain't never got Black Murphy!"

Jake nodded.

"That's who it is."

"Black Murphy!" said the fat man. "Yuh got Black Murphy? Black Murphy! The cur! Black Murphy, hey!" He repeated the name over and over in deep awe. "How did yuh do it, Jake? Tell us!"

"Oh, thar' was a girl, an' she went back on him," said Jake simply. "That's all." Then he continued with more concern: "Say, did yuh hear anything o' Sam Johnson? He was to 'uv met me up on the trail, an' never done show up."

"Ain't yuh heard? Broke his leg this afternoon, over to Billy's."

"Poor old Sam! Broke his leg, did he? Well, I ain't surprised. He allers was kinder clumsy, that kid! Broke my gun last Fall, shootin' a ki-oyte. This boy helped me out, purty considerable. I was scairt o' that winder. If he'd been lookin' out an' thar'd been only the one of us—well! Shorty, shake hands with Mr. Faulkner. He's—he's on a visit from the East. Mr. Faulkner, this is Mr. Rogers."

Faulkner, as one in a dream, found himself grasping a huge calloused hand.

"Pleased to meet yuh, Mr. Faulkner. What was the name? Faulkner, hey?" wheezed the fat man. "Yuh gotten something to tell'm back home now, ain't yuh? Heh! heh! heh! Black Murphy, hey! Well, well!"

FAULKNER shivered. He felt as though these men who jested with the things he held sacred looked upon him as a child. He hated and despised them both.

"But," said Jake, "Mr. Faulkner's sore the way I done managed things." There was a quiet irony in Jake's tone that brought the blood into Faulkner's cheeks. "Thar's a heap o' things we don't see eye to eye on, but he thinks I didn't oughter 'uv shot Black Murphy when he opened the door without giving him warnin'."

"What's that?" said the fat man.

"Guess Mr. Faulkner thinks I oughter 'uv waited fer Black Murphy to shoot first."

The absurdity of this appealed to the fat man's sense of humor, which was primitive, so he laughed until he choked. Then he wiped his eyes.

"Shucks! I ain't heard nawthin' so good in years. Black Murphy! Wait fer Black Murphy to shoot! Heh! heh! heh!" He moved away from the back of the buckboard and stood by Faulkner. "What would yuh 'uv done, hey? Ain't yuh never heard o' Black Murphy?" He pointed to the dead man. "Say, who's that?"

Faulkner shrugged his shoulders.

"That's the poor devil you call Black Murphy, though——"

"Well, he's dead, ain't he? An' Jake Harrison's alive, ain't he? Now, what yuh know?"

"I know this," retorted Faulkner, "that he was shot down like a dog! It makes me sick to think of it. Whatever he may have been or done, nothing excuses killing a man like that!"

Jake smiled at the ears of the philosophical pony.

Then the fat man opened his mouth and up-spake firmly and to the point, yet dispassionately and without anger:

"Jake shot him down as soon as he opened the door, hey? What in —— did yuh think he'd do? Ask him to have a drink? Ask him to git in the rig and be a prisoner? ——! Jake had as much chance o' gittin' Black Murphy alive as he had uh gittin' the moon. Yuh don't know what Black Murphy done, an' yit yuh set thar' arguin' like a member uh Congress.

"He warn't fitten to live, that man! Seven murders to his name, he had; seven that we knew of, an' God knows how many more besides. An' that's the man you're raising all that dicker about. Seven people shot down in cold blood, and us round here knowin' that he had crossed the Mojave an', was hidin' in the hills somewheres. How'd yuh like to leave the house in the mornin', an' your women-folk, an' never know what you'd find when you'd come back at night?

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And one o' the men he killed—wait a bit, Jake! Lemme finish, durn yuh!—one o' the men he shot was Jake's brother. Now, j'er understand? Shot'm, with his wife an' children lookin' on!

"An' yit yuh, yuh try an' teach a man like Jake Harrison, who's gotten more good in his little finger than yuh have in your whole durn carcase, what he oughter do when he meets an animal like Black Murphy! I tell you, I'm just sick o' yuh fellers who come outen here to show us how to run our own country an' tell us how much better things is in Boston an' Noo York, an' why don't we wear white collars an'——"

The fat man paused, exhausted by his own vehemence.

"That 'ull do, Shorty," said Jake, swinging himself out of his seat. "How 'bout some supper. Got anything? I'm purty near starved, and I guess Mr. Faulkner is too. Come 'long, kid."

FOR a moment Faulkner did not move. He was staring dismally at the moon in the milk-blue sky, and the solemn hills, and the tall gum trees beyond the wide stretches of alfalfa. He felt humble and miserable, and altogether insignificant. And he knew then that the ideals and beliefs that he had cherished as more valuable than life itself were entirely ridiculous from the point of view of Black Murphy, deceased. There were other things that Faulkner realized, too; all wholesome and for the good of his immortal soul.

Slowly and stiffly he climbed out of the buckboard. Jake had lifted the saddle, and by the light of the moon he could see Black Murphy lying on his back with his arms bent and an expression of surprise frozen on his white face.

"Ugh!" said the fat man. The dogs growled and whimpered. "Cut it out, doggone yuh!"

"Jake," said Faulkner timidly. "I was wrong and I'm sorry—I didn't understand, quite, and——"

He found it difficult to say all that he had intended, but Jake stopped him.

"Sure, that's all right. Fergit it, kid. Don't say another word, or I'll——"

Here the fat man broke in.

"I'll go see if my missus is makin' the cawfee. Thar'll be eggs an' bacon an' cold beef an' cold biscuits an'——" He waddled off into the house.

"Gimme a hand with this thing, then we'll eat supper," said Jake.

"I hope," said Faulkner, still bent on making amends, "that you'll forget the things I've said to you, Mr. Harrison, when——"

"See here, kid," said Jake, very earnestly. "I'll fergit any durn' thing you like, but—thar's something I've been hankering to say ever since I met yuh." Here Jake sank his voice to an impressive whisper. "For God's sake, cut out smokin' them cigareets o' yourn! If my meetin' yuh 'ull make yuh quit dopin' yourself that ways—well, I guess the day ain't been wasted. Now, yuh, take a-holt o' the legs, and I'll take the shoulders. Ready?"

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Salan Dowan, Soldier

by Andrew Ellicott

HE STOOD in the glare of the Philippine sunshine and stared at the two white men who hugged the strip of shade along the side of the old Spanish fort. He was only a boy, a Moro boy, a member of that pirate race which a few centuries ago ruled the Malay seas. His scanty cotton clothes revealed a bronzed skin and what, for a boy, were well-developed muscles. A closely cropped head, a pug-nose and two sharp black eyes combined with his dress to give him an appearance half comic, half savage.

It was no ordinary thing, this addressing of an American officer. That he felt that the outcome of the interview was uncertain was apparent, for hope and doubt struggled for supremacy in his brown face.

The American in the uniform of the native constabulary looked at the little Moro and smiled.

"So your name is Salan Dowan, and you want to be a soldier?" he asked in the native dialect.

The boy merely nodded, but his quick, eager glance showed more plainly than words that his heart was set on an affirmative answer. There was something, too, in that expression which caused the officer to pause, and instead of telling the boy that he was still too young and too small to be a soldier, to put two or three questions to him in the native tongue.

The other officer, a young regular, waited for the talk to end; though he understood not a word of the conversation, he watched with amusement and admiration the fierce, outspoken way in which the little Moro was pleading his cause.

The constabulary officer turned to his companion and said in English,

"The little rascal wants to join the native troops; he is dead set on it. He says he has no people, and I can't get anything out of him about his past. He certainly has the military spirit, though. I told him he was not big enough nor old enough to be a soldier, but he insists he could hold his own with some of the natives of my present detachment. I believe he would make good, too, but if I enlisted him, the first inspector who came in here from Manila would think that I had gone crazy and had started to recruit a boys' brigade. The kid knows that there is fighting going on up the valley and that my men are likely to be called upon, but that does not bother him; a fight seems to be what he wants. I certainly like his nerve—but it is no use."

The officer turned and finished his remarks in Moro. The youngster turned slowly and dejectedly away, casting a longing glance as he left at the native sentinel resplendent in brass-buttoned uniform and bright-red, gilt-adorned fez.

"Say," suddenly exclaimed the constab-

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ulary officer, "you are a new arrival over here—have you a boy to look out for you? You know every American officer in these islands has a boy to work for him. About the only compensation we half-paid officers have over here is that, in this land of cheap labor, each of us is rich enough to have a servant. Why don't you give that youngster a chance?"

He yelled and waved his hand at the boy who was moving slowly away toward the thatched roofs of the nearby town. The boy turned and came back. He did not know these Americans very well; they sometimes did funny things. Perhaps they were calling him back now to have a little fun at his expense. The failure of his hopes of being a soldier was no joking matter. He did not speak when he reached the officers, but shot a hostile and questioning glance out of his black eyes. The boy heard the situation explained, he pondered over it, adjusted his scanty clothes around him, dug a bare toe into the ground to help his thoughts, and finally reached a conclusion. After all, if he could not be a soldier, what difference did it make what happened? With a shrug of the shoulders, a wave of the hand, and a single word he gave his consent.

AND thus it was that two days later an odd-looking pair appeared on the dock to take a launch up the river to join the fighting forces. The first one of them who stepped aboard was lieutenant Clifton, the fresh color in whose cheeks emphasized the fact among the dark natives and bronzed soldiers that he was a recent arrival from the land where the snow falls in the Winter. The set of his shoulders under his khaki blouse told an observing eye that West Point had but recently sent one more man into the service.

Any one but the cotton-clad Filipinos who loafed along the dock might have pondered over the incongruity of a system that had sent a young man with four years' hard training and a thorough education to waste his energy and health in the swamps of this tropical valley. Having pondered this question, any one would have probably smiled at the Moro boy who followed the young officer aboard, who carefully deposited a haversack and canteen on the deck, calmly perched himself beside a machine gun, and surveyed with a lordly air two other Moro boys who were paddling a leaky dugout up the stream.

The whistle blew, the hawsers were cast off, and the little launch chugged her way out into deep water and headed up-stream toward that region whence came reports of hikes and skirmishes, of night alarms and hidden ambushes. On the deck sat the young officer, the product of the best military training, and the little Moro, a young barbarian, strong in his natural instinct for war, bound together on their first expedition. Their eyes met, a smile twitched the lips of the young officer and an answering grin wrinkled the face of the boy.

Until late in the afternoon, the launch nosed her way up the muddy river, past long stretches of jungle where the monkeys chattered in the trees, past half-hidden sand-bars where alligators lay basking in the hot sun or dropped into the water with a sudden flop. At last a bend in the river disclosed a point of land on which showed the shelter tents of the American troops. The troops were in camp awaiting orders that would send them once more out on the trails to try conclusions with their savage Moro enemies.

Here lieutenant Clifton joined his company, and Salan Dowan began to learn the ways of the white man. Then came days of weary waiting in a camp which shimmered under a tropical sun. Rumors of where the enemy was were conflicting. If possible, no movement of the troops was to be made until there should be some hope of decisive results. The whole situation hinged on what the wily Moro chieftain, Datto Usap, might be doing.

The crafty savage was playing his game carefully, he wasted neither men nor ammunition, but cautiously vanished into the swamps and hazarded a fight only when he thought that the odds were greatly in his favor. Officers and soldiers alike dreamed of sudden marches and surprises which would bring the hostile chief within their grasp, but there was nothing to do for the present but to wait. All this lieutenant Clifton learned as he and other officers heard reports from friendly natives and puzzled over maps covered with unpronounceable names.

Nor was Salan Dowan's education being neglected; in fact, it began the night of his arrival. As the native boys who worked for the various officers gathered at the cook

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tent with the tin plates of their masters, the first boy to have his plate filled was the boy of the senior officer. This theory of rank was new to Salan Dowan. Was not he working for a *teniente*? Certainly he was, and his *teniente's* plate was to be the first one filled even if it meant a fight.

AND that was exactly what it did mean, for the next moment found Salan Dowan rolling and kicking in the dust and fighting as though the thing in the world most dear to him were at stake. A big sergeant pulled the boys apart. After receiving from the other boys lengthy explanations in high-pitched Moro, Salan Dowan accepted the inevitable and took the place to which his master's rank entitled him. But he had shown his loyalty to the man he served.

More than this, the half-dozen soldiers who had seen the brief fight had admired the ferocity of his attack, and from that time dated the foundation of his comradeship with the soldiers of lieutenant Clifton's company. Race is not a factor in the admiration of one fighter for another.

At last orders came that sent lieutenant Clifton's company into the field. The line of a hundred soldiers slipped quietly from the camp it had occupied for many weeks and disappeared in single file down one of the trails that led into the swamps. Behind the soldiers came a string of natives carrying extra rations and ammunition. Among these carriers was Salan Dowan bearing his master's blanket and haversack, and his own equipment, which consisted of one large piece of many-colored cloth.

For two weeks the little command sweltered through the swamps. Their work was fruitless; nothing more exciting occurred than an exchange of shots by the advance-guard and the occasional whine of a bullet over the camp at night.

But Salan Dowan and his master had profited by these two weeks; they had found their place in such campaigning—campaigning which consisted mostly in pitting health and endurance against the ravages of disease-breeding swamps, short rations, and a pitiless, scorching sun. The young officer and the Moro had come to understand each other, but not by an exchange of ideas through conversation, for Salan Dowan had learned but few words of English, and most of them, it must be admitted, were profane. But he and his lieutenant, whose wants were simple in such a country, managed to communicate by means of signs and a small assortment of garbled Spanish.

They had learned to take events as they came; at night they slept in the mud or on the hard ground as the case might be; the lieutenant ate his hardtack and bacon while Salan Dowan clung to his native dish of rice; they drank the same swamp water covered with green scum, though Salan Dowan could never understand why his lieutenant should prefer to have this water boiled when possible—the theory of germs and bacilli was not a part of his early education.

Their first hike was simply a forerunner of many that were to come, all part of the ceaseless hunt of Datto Usap. On one of these hikes Salan Dowan appeared before lieutenant Clifton about dusk. He had the lieutenant's canteen filled with boiled water still hot, and was on his way to a nearby stream to cool it. All day the hostile Moros had hung around the flanks of the little column, and Salan Dowan made it known by means of signs that he did not wish to venture far from the friendly soldiers unarmed.

Lieutenant Clifton took his own revolver from his belt, unloaded it and showed Salan Dowan how to manipulate it, then reloaded it and handed it to the boy. Proud of his temporary arms, Salan Dowan took the big revolver and slipped away into the dusk.

"You shouldn't trust a native with a gun," commented an older officer; "not one of them can be counted upon. That boy with a new revolver would be welcome among the Moros."

"You may be right," lieutenant Clifton replied, "but I will stake anything on Salan Dowan's proving faithful."

An hour later, as the officers watched, a small figure came for a moment into the glare of the camp-fire, a wild-looking, quaint figure half clad in faded cotton, carrying in one hand a canteen with the dulled letters U. S. on its side, and in the other hand the big Colt. Salan Dowan had returned safely.

AND so the hiking continued for days until the days grew into weeks, but the wily Moros never hazarded a decisive battle, and Datto Usap was still uncaught. The soldiers grew thin and haggard; now and then one was invalided

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back to the coast and a new man would take his place. But Salan Dowan still clung to his task; hardship never seemed to wear on him.

Possibly on the long hikes, when even the rice supply was scanty, the muscles on his little brown body would stand out more plainly, but that was all. When the soldiers were tired and weary, and a smile or a joke was a rarity, Salan Dowan would move through camp with his black eyes twinkling and a grin on his face which extended upward and showed in many wrinkles on his forehead.

Only when he thought that any one was reflecting on his dignity or that of his *teniente* would he show anger; then his black eyes would smolder and flash, and a scowl would settle on his face which would show the real savage that lay underneath. On such occasions, neither officer nor soldier teased him too far.

Often at a halt, when the tired soldiers flung themselves down for a few moments' rest, Salan Dowan's bare feet would come pattering down the trail. On his face would be that wrinkled, cheerful grin. Some soldier would call to him in English some remark absolutely nonunderstandable to the boy. Salan Dowan would reply with a burst of Moro equally unintelligible to the soldier, then both would laugh as though it were the best joke possible, and Salan Dowan would patter along toward the head of the column.

Time passed and the soldiers felt that they were doomed to an eternal search after Datto Usap; some began to believe that the Moro chief was a myth. At last there came a day when the little command was plodding along a trail that led through alternate jungle and tall grass, when the sun blazed down with tropical fervor, when the spirit of every man had reached its lowest ebb.

Suddenly from the advance-guard of the command there came the crack of rifles; the soldiers of the main body moved doggedly along without a show of interest; too often had they heard these shots at the head of the column only to find that a few stray Moros had lain in wait to try a shot at the Americans. All that most of the soldiers usually saw of such an incident was a few empty cartridge-cases along the trail, or possibly the body of a Moro who had tarried too long and had paid the penalty.

But this time on the heels of the rifle reports there followed a ragged, crashing volley. Every soldier knew what that volley meant; the long-delayed stand-up fight that they had been awaiting had come at last. That volley came not from the rifles of the few men of the American advance-guard, but from those of the massed Moros. Word passed down the column: "They have tried to ambush us; the woods are full of them just ahead."

Commands of officers and sergeants rang out. The first platoon deployed to the right front and opened fire. Down the trail, half concealed by the tropical growth, a soldier came at a run.

"The Captain orders that lieutenant Clifton and twenty men stay here in reserve; every other man on the firing-line!" he shouted.

The native carriers were huddled together for protection, and lieutenant Clifton disposed of his men to meet an emergency and waited. From ahead of them came the cracking of Krag rifles, the roar of the old Remingtons of the Moros, mingled with their high, shrill war-cries. Through the leaves the smell of burnt powder sifted back from the firing-line, and stray bullets whined and sang overhead. A sergeant with a few men burst from the tall grass and shouted to lieutenant Clifton,

"The Captain says for you to take all of your men and try and get around the right flank of the Moros; I'll show you the way. We are up against the real thing."

THE lieutenant plunged into the jungle, following the lead of the sergeant. They came to a small clearing in the woods, and, as he glanced about, lieutenant Clifton saw trotting behind him little Salan Dowan, his eyes sparkling, his face lit with the joy of battle. Lieutenant Clifton turned and signed for him to go back and join the native carriers in rear.

The boy stopped; the light died from his face. One thinks fast in such moments, and when he saw the change come over the face of Salan Dowan, there flashed through the mind of the lieutenant a picture of the boy as he had first seen him in the sunshine beside the old Spanish fort making his plea to be a soldier. It was too much for the young officer; he gave a wave of the hand for the boy to follow, and plunged on.

The lieutenant and his men circled

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through the jungle and then cut in toward the firing. That fortune of war which hovers alike over a Gettysburg or a small skirmish favored him that day, and he suddenly found himself on the flank and rear of the Moro force. As yet unseen, he had time to get his sweating, panting men in line. With the brown bodies of the Moros for targets, his men knelt and opened fire.

They fired not hurriedly nor at random, but sent each shot to square long days of sweating toil and nights of sleepless vigil. They fired to revenge a comrade who had been knifed on outpost or snipped off by a bullet in the night. For a moment the Moros were stunned, their firing ceased; then their shrill yells rose on the stifling air. A powerful Moro drew his long knife and started toward the little command of the lieutenant.

Realizing that their best chance was to rush this new enemy, the Moros massed behind their leader and came at a run. As they came, many dropped their rifles and drew their long razor-edged knives. A Moro with a rifle is formidable, but when he draws his knife he is terrible. Many of the Moros dropped before the fire of the magazine rifles, but the rest came on.

Lieutenant Clifton, standing on the line with his men, fired into the oncoming mass, and, as the two lines closed for a hand-to-hand conflict, he crumpled up and sank to his knees with a bullet through his body. His revolver slipped from his grasp. Towering over him, the huge Moro who had headed the rush whirled his shining blade to deal the blow that would end the work of the bullet.

As he sank to the ground, lieutenant Clifton saw a small brown hand shoot forward and grasp his fallen revolver; he saw the smoke-grimed muzzle turn upward toward the huge Moro, the brown finger close convulsively on the trigger, and felt the sting of the powder following the report. The Moro spun part way around, but the powerful swing of his heavy knife was diverted, not checked. With his dying effort he finished the stroke which struck not the wounded white man, but the brown body of Salan Dowan.

Not half of the men who had followed lieutenant Clifton on his detour in rear of the enemy were alive when the rest of the company broke the now weakened Moro line and came to the rescue. But the detour had saved the day; the reckoning after many months had come for the Moros. Not rifle, knife, nor bravery could stay the hand of the soldiers once they had broken the Moro line.

In the confused mass where the hand-to-hand fight had taken place the soldiers found their wounded lieutenant. Near him lay the body of a huge Moro, the long-hunted Datto Usap himself, and between the two lay little Salan Dowan, one hand still grasping the big forty-five revolver. As a soldier stooped over him he revived and a grin shown on his face, but the wrinkles did not reach their old playground on his forehead.

THE surgeon, neglecting in the meantime two wounded soldiers who insisted that the boy's wounds be treated first, bent over the boy.

"A terrible slash," he muttered as he worked; "a slash that would finish a white man, but this boy has the vitality of a savage—life in the open air, a simple diet, and all that—and," he added almost lovingly, "he is a beautiful specimen for a surgeon to work upon."

In the meantime the Captain had got his men in hand, hastily detailed a few of them to guard the wounded and the stores, and with the rest disappeared in pursuit of the Moros. As the surgeon worked over his charges, a final burst of shots, their sound dulled by distance and jungle, reached him; then all was silent.

Toward sunset a tired soldier came from the Captain with an order for all to move forward to make the night's camp.

"It is a fine camping-place with good water," the soldier commented, and passed around his cool, moist-covered canteen in proof. As the others sipped the water, he added: "We struck a village about a mile from here—a sort of temporary capital of Datto Usap, I guess. The Moros made their last stand there; I expect you heard the firing. We drove the men out, but the place is full of women and kids." And he added with a grin, "The women of the Datto's harem are all prisoners in the biggest house in the village."

An hour later the guard with the native carriers, and the wounded borne on rough litters, entered the clearing where lay the village. As they debouched from the woods the lowering sun cast a flickering light over

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the pale faces of the wounded and the grimy faces of the guard. On the edge of the village smoke rose from the smoldering ruins of some burned shacks. Under foot, the grass, which had been fired by the burning shacks, lay black and smoking.

Crossing through the village, the toiling procession had reached the largest shack when one of the rough doors shot open and a Moro woman sprang from the dark interior and darted straight toward the litters of the wounded. Startled by the suddenness of her appearance, and fearful of some deed of revenge, a soldier raised the butt of his rifle to strike, but held it poised as the woman sank sobbing by the side of the litter of Salan Dowan.

The procession stopped; the native carriers stood gaping, open-mouthed. The soldiers stood silent and awkward; on the face of each was an expression of pity and guilt as though he were somehow to blame for all of this. Unmoved they had that day seen men, both friend and foe, die in battle, but here, in a woman sobbing over her wounded, they saw a new phase of warfare.

A native who acted as interpreter slipped into the house and, returning shortly, silently resumed his place. Like a true Oriental, he advanced no information until a sergeant jabbed him in the side with his thumb, jerked the thumb toward the woman and demanded,

"What's she howling about the kid for?"

"The woman ees his mother," the native answered.

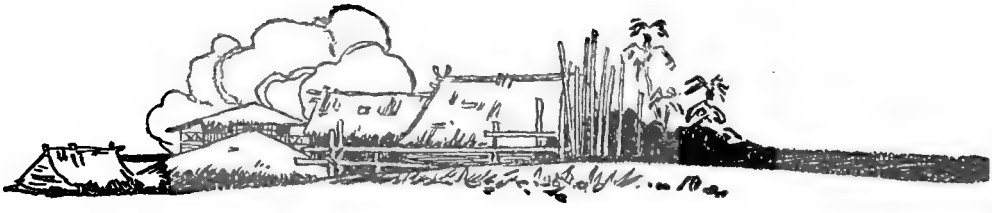
"Go on; give us the rest of it," muttered the sergeant.

"Once she was the wife of a little datto who serve the big Datto Usap. Datto Usap like her very much. No one know, but they say he have the little datto killed, then he take the woman himself. When this happen Salan Dowan go away, no one know where, and his mother no see him till now."

"And that is why the lieutenant himself could not keep the little fellow out of the fight to-day; the boy had an account to square; and he squared it!" murmured the sergeant. "Kid, I take off my hat to you!" and he reverently raised his battered campaign hat.

PEACE now rules over the broad valley where Moro and soldier once struggled for supremacy. The rude breastworks in the jungle are hidden by the tropical growth. White man and brown meet on friendly terms.

In the little village near the mouth of the big river you may even see a public school with an American teacher and many black-eyed little Moros. If you desire it, the teacher will point out things of interest in the village, and may even take you to visit a certain little house where a Moro woman works busily before her loom. If you delay long enough, the woman will bring forth a carefully hidden box of beaten brass, and from it produce several kodak pictures of a sturdy Moro boy and an American officer, and she will tell you marvelous tales of things of the past, and things in store in the future for a wonderful son and his *teniente*.



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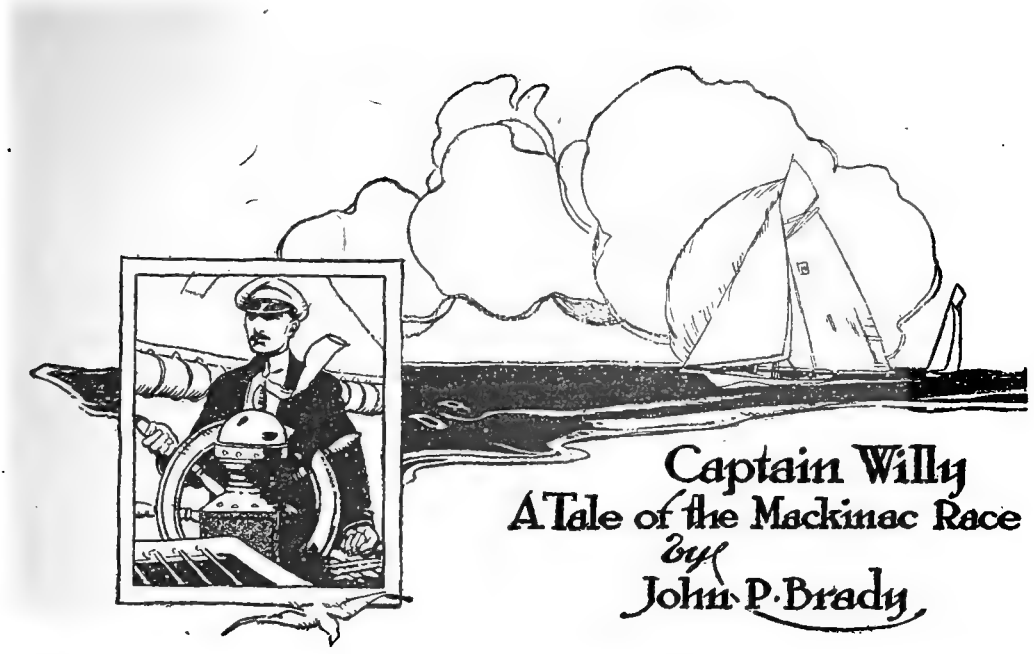

Captain Willy

A Tale of the Mackinac Race

by

John P. Brady

"STAND-BY—Ready and about—Hard a-lee!" sang out Skipper Willy. The great sloop *Dolphin* shot up into the wind. Round whirled her nose over the foaming water and the heavy main boom swung across the deck while her clouds of canvas crackled aloft like a battery of pompoms.

The immense sails filled rapidly as the yacht answered her helm, and with a preliminary dipping of her lee rail she gathered headway and straightened up. She bore down on the starting-line with tremendous speed, and the eyes of the crew were focused on the judges' boat.

"Five seconds more," said Navigator Sexton.

The *Dolphin* was twenty yards from the windward stake. Then the smoke from the starting gun streamed out, and across went the big sloop, first of the fleet bound for the three hundred and thirty-five mile race to Mackinac.

"Break out the balloon," echoed from the cockpit, and in a second or two that enormous area of cloth bellied out over the water and pulled the yacht along at a terrific pace.

There was a twenty-mile breeze over the starboard quarter, and the squadron of schooners, yawls and sloops found the going good.

All the vessels in the fleet watched the *Dolphin*. She was the new and the feared boat in the race. Her crew was composed of some of the best Corinthians on the lakes and her skipper and owner was Captain Willy. It was his first attempt in the Mackinac as a commander, and the burly sailors who had the Mackinac habit smiled as they pictured the gentle Willy in a blow.

"Nice little fellow and he has a good crew, but he's too ladylike," was the consensus of opinion. "Too much of a dandy for this game," agreed the sailormen.

Even his own crew shared in these estimates of the new owner and captain of the *Dolphin*.

Willy was anything but imposing as he stood there by the topmast backstay and gazed proudly at his splendid boat.

Five feet four in his immaculate canvas shoes, blue suit and pretty cap, his was not a figure that would inspire six-foot sailormen with awe. And then his face was wreathed in smiles. It almost pained him to give a command. Politeness, gentleness, suavity and undisturbable good nature were personified in Captain Willy.

Gracefully leaning against the backstay the diminutive skipper swept the fleet with his glasses.

"Guess we'll give these racers a bit of a battle," suggested the skipper to the men on the after-deck.

The *Dolphin* remained right out in front of the going. Big schooners with Yankees set and everything drawing made no gain

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on the sloop. Other sloops and the yawls in the race were gradually dropped astern, and it was easily seen that if the wind held as it was the *Dolphin* would be the first to show her nose over the finish-line in the Straits.

Captain Willy was overjoyed with the showing his boat was making and, excusing himself, he went below to hold a conference with the steward. The *Dolphin* was well provisioned, as Willy was an Epicurean and he intended to celebrate his entrance in the Mackinac.

BIG BILL BALDEYE was at the stick when Captain Willy went below. Around him in the cockpit were seated the Corinthians in the crew. There was Allen, one of the best amateurs on fresh water; Walton was another, and Moran was a third as good as the other two. Wallins and Collin, two little fellows but powerful light-canvas men, also had accepted Willy's invitation to sail with him.

"Nice of Captain Willy to get us this big hooker," said Baldeye. "Really thoughtful of him," echoed Allen. "I think he will make about the pleasantest owner we possibly could have procured. He is so polite that he will accept our suggestions without a murmur. We can make him Captain of the hold while we will run the ship from the decks up. Sometimes owners do want to butt in and sail their boats, but I don't think our little Willy is that kind of a man."

"Wonder what he will do when she blows?" said Wallins. "I suppose our Willy will be curled up in his cabin with his stomach working that 'reverse English' stuff."

"Well, we might as well start in training him in the proper way," said Baldeye. "You fellows leave it to me and I'll start him right."

The little skipper couldn't stay below long. He knew he had a fine crew aboard and he wanted to get busy working them.

Up he popped out of the companionway and marched over to Baldeye with the evident intention of taking the stick. Baldeye paid no attention to Willy and it was galling to the skipper. Finally, in the politest manner possible, he asked Baldeye whether he would mind letting him take the wood just to see how the old hooker was behaving.

Baldeye yielded up the tiller with an air of good-natured tolerance that was rough on Captain Willy's feelings. However, he said nothing, for the eyes of the other men were on him and he feared to show his sensitiveness.

Chesterfield was an uncouth savage compared to the *Dolphin's* Captain. In every ballroom of the smart set there was always a place for Willy. In fact no function was complete unless it was graced by the presence of the dapper, smiling, suave and gentle dandy.

Among all the hundreds of yachtsmen making the voyage to the Mackinac there was only one who did not look upon Willy as the joke of the sailing game.

Commodore Thompson told some of them that Willy was just as like as not to show a lot of things they never dreamed of.

"He's been out with me many a time, and I never saw him show the white feather, no matter what the going. The *Dolphin* will be driven for all that is in her," declared the Commodore.

There wasn't much to choose between the yachts in the vanguard of the fleet. Four big schooners and a fast yawl disputed the lead with the *Dolphin*. The weather and the going were more to the liking of the twin-stickers than of the sloop, but still she held her own. As the wind showed signs of coming around astern there was every reason for the *Dolphin's* crew to believe their boat would pull away from the rest of the fleet before many miles of the long race had been sailed.

At sundown the yachts had left the starting-point many miles behind them and they were out of sight of land. A faint haze in the west could be seen from the mastheads of the boats, but this was all that told the yachtsmen there was land to the sundown side.

The *Dolphin* still was leading. A quarter of a mile astern two great schooners were sailing within biscuit-toss of each other, the crews talking back and forth without the aid of megaphones. A mile behind these two came another pair of double-stickers, also on even terms with each other. The remainder of the fleet was strung out at various intervals. Every yacht, however, was in plain sight of the leader.

"This breeze is going to hold steady all night and freshen in the morning. We won't have to touch a rope for hours, but we will be busy to-morrow," said the weatherwise Sexton.

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"That's fine," said Skipper Willy. "Although we are not drawing away from those schooners, still they are not gaining any on us. What do you think are the chances of this air getting dead astern, Mr. Sexton?"

"If it does and we can use our spinnaker we will show those schooners a sinking hull!" declared the navigator. "It seems to me it is coming around a bit."

Here Sexton took a walk forward and gazed thoughtfully at the canvas.

Every stitch on the big hooker was drawing like a tug-of-war team. She had her club-topsail and balloon jib on, and these with the mainsail and foresail sent her through the water like an express train.

The big fabric was heeled over, but her rail was far from down. The rigging was humming the song that the sailor loves, and the yachtsmen began to hope for a smashing of records.

It was a merry duel all night among the big yachts of the vanguard. Toward midnight, however, the breeze hauled to the southward and the *Dolphin* flung out her spinnaker. This piece of canvas gave her a big advantage and she increased her lead upon her competitors.

At daybreak the whole fleet was in sight from the hindmost yacht of the big division, but the *Dolphin* away out in front could make out only the five large craft immediately astern of her. She was too far in the lead to be on speaking terms with any of them and as the breeze was freshening it looked as if she would be an easy winner of the Mackinac.

Captain Willy was on deck early. He had turned in when all was running smoothly, as he knew the race would be won or lost in the last few hours of the sailing and he wanted to be fit for the ordeal. The members of his crew thought he had retired for other reasons. In fact Wallin suggested that the skipper was sick.

BUT Willy was as spick and span as ever when he popped out of the companionway. Those who had been up all night had begun to show signs of weariness. In fact the dapper little skipper was the only presentable person on board.

Baldeye was at the tiller when Willy came up on deck. He had been there since midnight, and it was an effort to answer the skipper's cheery salutation. So Willy did not try to carry on a conversation. Instead he took note of the wind, the weather and the water as well as his beloved ship.

They had crossed the lake and were nearly half-way over the course. The yacht had been making from ten to fifteen miles an hour all night and was several miles in the lead.

As the sun came up and glowered red, Willy could see they were in for a real gale. The clouds were banked heavily in the east, and after showing a few fitful gleams, the sun shoved under a mass of mist, and that was the last seen of him for several days.

"She will be blowing a bit more than we had bargained for," said Willy after taking a slant around the horizon. "But let her blow: that is just what this packet likes. We will hang up a mark in this Mackinac race that will keep them shooting for some time before they reach it."

"Land Ho!" echoed from the lookout up forward. All eyes at once were turned to the east, and there, just peeking over the wave-furrowed horizon, was Little Point Sable. The shore-line blended with the clouds, and it was only when the lighthouse was picked up that the yachtsmen were sure of their position.

Ten miles or so from the eastern shore of the lake the *Dolphin* held her course toward Point Betsey. The wind was freshening rapidly. The spinnaker pole was tossed high into the air when the harder gusts swept up, and Sexton ordered the sail taken in.

"Pardon," said Willy, "but please leave her under all her canvas, Mr. Sexton. I want to see how the old girl behaves with her glad rags on. We have new rigging on this boat, and I do not think it would be asking too much of some of the boys to climb out on the spinnaker and hold it down." Four men immediately swung out on the pole, and the added weight kept the spar in position and added to the speed of the craft.

Sexton shook his head. When Willy was up forward he remarked to the men in the cockpit that Willy was crazy. But the spinnaker still remained on the boat.

"Looks as if we will have a little trouble with Willy, after all," said Sexton. "It's because he is ignorant of the sailing game, though, and not because he is so terribly courageous. Wait until she gets to be a

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reefing breeze, and then we will see some fun."

THEY didn't have long to wait. The closer the big sloop got to the foot of the lake, the harder blew the wind. The craft flew past Ludington and Frankfort and along about three in the afternoon South Manitou hove in sight. When off this island the wind hauled to the east and came in ever-strengthening gusts. It was impossible to carry the spinnaker, owing to the change in the course of the wind, and Willy readily enough consented to taking in the canvas when he saw nothing was to be gained by keeping it up.

The sloop was making much different weather of it now from what she had been making earlier in the day. With the gale over her quarter she careened to port and the water began to show over her lee rail. There now ensued genuine alarm. The *Dolphin* never before had had her rail down. The old professional on board her declared her rigging could not stand the strain. Sexton, Wallin, Collin and the rest agreed, and Sexton ordered the balloon jib stowed and the club topsail in.

Again Willy in his politest manner interfered.

"What is the matter, gentlemen? Do you think there is great danger?"

"Danger?" said Sexton. "Oh, no, There is not danger at all! The stick and all that is on it will just naturally pop out of her if we carry on much longer!"

"Mercy me," cried Willy, "one would think they would build boats stronger than they do. It is a pity to take in sail in this kind of weather."

And Willy felt the topmast backstay which was singing a song that could be heard above the roaring of the wind.

"It does seem a pity to put such a strain on such a small piece of hemp. How would it be to rig up a preventer backstay?"

The crew were dumfounded.

"What?" they roared when they recovered. "Are you crazy?"

"I beg your pardon, gentlemen," said Willy, "but I deem it a shame to scandalize the ship. Let us not make her feel that we underrate her powers. Let us carry canvas until we have a wall of green water six inches high over the lee rail there.

"Of course if a squall knocks us down we can then think of taking off some of the stuff, but, until then, let her carry her clothes. I think she is proud of them."

"Crazy! 'Fools rush in where real sailors fear to tread,'" misquoted Wallin.

But Willy had his way.

"It's his boat," said Sexton, "and if he wants to reduce her to a derelict it's none of our business. She won't sink, anyway. At least she oughtn't to."

At length, however, even Willy had enough. The wind came up out of the east-southeast and hit the yacht with tremendous force. The big white racer lay over to the blast and the water smoked through her lee shrouds. It raced back over her deck with the force of a Niagara current, and ever and anon her long boom slapped the big rollers and skimmed them of their spray. The tops of the combers were torn off by the pressure of the wind and hurled aboard the *Dolphin* until her decks were drenched. Those who were off watch were driven below, and all sought such shelter as they could find. All but Captain Willy. With the same gentle smile as when he presided at a dinner he stood up against the backstay and gazed hither and thither.

"I really believe he is enjoying it!" said Sexton. "Where ignorance is bliss is right over there by the backstay."

No one else was enjoying the trip. The majority were alarmed. They thought of the little fellows in that race and figured that unless they had put into shelter there would be some yachts missing from the lists on the Great Lakes.

IT WAS only when a squall fiercer than the rest hit the big racer and jammed her over on her beam ends that Willy consented to stowing some of his canvas. Then to the great relief of his navigator and the others he begged that the balloon give place to the reaching jib, and that the club do likewise by the working topsail.

The boys jumped to their work with a will, as they were pretty badly scared. The change in the canvas relieved the big sloop considerably, and, straightening up, she made better weather of it for a time. However, by dusk the wind had hit an eighty-mile gait, and with the immense mainsail still showing, the *Dolphin* was lying over as badly as ever.

"For God's sake, let's reef her!" howled Sexton, now badly frightened.

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He was seconded by the rest of the Corinthians, who voted the gale the worst they ever had known.

"Gentlemen," pleaded Willy, "please let her keep her clothes. I know it is blowing a strong breeze, but brace up and we will pull through."

The big sailors were ashamed to show the white feather before a man whom they considered more feminine than masculine, but they couldn't help it.

They swarmed on deck and made known to Willy that they were willing to see him drowned, but that they were against that kind of death for themselves.

It was now dark. It was impossible to see fifty yards in any direction. Straight on her course the yacht had fifty miles of sea-room and there was a hundred and fifty miles to leeward, with the exception of a small island and a bad reef which they were nearing. Sexton figured they were within ten miles of this shoal, and that the best thing they could do would be to stick around where they were as well as they could and wait for morning.

Finally the wind kicked up so strong it was absolutely necessary to take in the canvas. Willy at length yielded and ordered a couple of reefs in the mainsail, and half an hour later agreed to taking in all sail but a storm-trysail and staysail.

"We aren't many miles off Fisherman's Reef," declared Sexton. "Wish we could pick up the Charlevoix light and get into shelter. I'll bet the rest of them are hugging the eastern shore of the lake pretty closely. That's where we ought to be too."

"But," declared Willy, "we are out to win a yacht race, not for a Midsummer cruise with ladies aboard. I am going to win this race unless I pile this hooker up on the shore."

And the dapper little skipper began biting his lip.

They hung on to the course Sexton set, and he tried to shave the corner of Fisherman's island too closely.

The *Dolphin* had that part of the lake to herself. She was on the steamer course, but there were no steamers. Even the big liners remained tied up to their wharfs. The fog-horns were working overtime, for the night was black as ink. The clouds were blown so low they smothered out every bit of light that otherwise might have been refracted. And the flying spray and rain and mist completely shut from the view the light on Fisherman's Reef. How the *Dolphin* kept her course and how the yachtsmen knew where she lay were tributes to the ability of the Corinthians aboard her. When a steamer can not navigate Lake Michigan, God help the sailboat!

The men aboard the *Dolphin*, from Sexton to the steward, were now thoroughly alarmed. Without saying a word to Willy, Sexton set a course for Charlevoix. And he knew he would have to keep close to Fisherman's Point if he would make smooth water on that tack. He feared the skipper was either out of his mind or so ignorant of the real predicament they were in that there was no use starting university extension for him when lives were at stake.

The navigator had only to change his course a few points, and he did this whenever Willy's eyes were not on the compass.

Willy went up forward, and when lost to view in the awful smother of foam and spray that came over ever and anon, Sexton took a larger sheer to starboard than usual. When his captain returned and the old course was resumed, Fisherman's Reef lay right across their track.

THERE was no sound of breakers to warn the yachtsmen of their peril. They could not see the red light which was now over the lee bow, for they kept their eyes trained straight ahead or to starboard. And even if they had held their eyes in the direction of the light, it is more than doubtful if they could have picked it up. Lights, no matter how powerful, can not penetrate far in such weather as prevailed then.

A terrific gust came down all unheralded and laid the big yacht over on her beam-ends. Even with the small stormsail and staysail she was carrying she could not stand up, and Sexton put the helm down to ease her off. The release of the wind allowed the yacht to right herself, but she ran fifty feet or so almost into the teeth of the wind.

Then some one picked up the red light almost dead astern.

"For God's sake, put her about! We are right on top of the reef!" yelled Willy.

Sexton tried to bring the yacht around, but she was taken aback. A mighty wave came up and hurled her to leeward, and another and another followed. With the

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small sail she had on it was impossible to get the yacht under way, and they were in the breakers. A big roller heaved her up and carried her as a Pacific comber carries a swimmer. The water broke into a smother and the yacht crashed upon the rocks. Her big fin keel held her fast and every little ripple showed its contempt for the boat by washing her decks from stem to stern.

The crash was much easier than expected, and the rigging was not damaged. In fact the tremendous smashing of the rollers was now what bothered the crew. All hands flew up on deck and took in sail as rapidly as the surges would allow.

They lost no time signaling for help. The blue rockets cleaved the air one after another and the life-savers came out. They got a line to the ship, and one by one across the waters went the crew of the *Dolphin*.

The powerful motor-boat cut away from the wreck and began its battle back to the harbor. The drenched yachtsmen sat quietly thankful for their preservation. It was so dark none could tell the next man's face. After an hour of terrific going, they reached the harbor.

"Poor Willy," said Sexton to himself, "I must never tell him how I tossed his yacht ashore. It would break his heart. But I did it for the best. Wonder where he is, anyway?"

But to the dismay of the outfit, Willy could not be found. They were certain he had left the wreck, because the last man had left the deck when the life-savers had cut away.

The boys were in a panic. They feared he had fallen overboard. But no one could remember having seen him on the life-boat and they begged the life-savers to go back.

In the meantime the wind had shifted and when the boat was fighting its way back over the return course, a big sloop under stormsail and storm-jib flew past them with the speed of a Flying Dutchman. There was no telling what boat it was. The life-savers beat their way out to the reef in the neighborhood of which they expected to find the *Dolphin*, but they could not make her out, and as they were in great danger themselves they sped back to the station.

There was nothing to be done. If Willy had remained aboard the *Dolphin* he was at the bottom of the lake. At that, though, they did not expect she would break up so fast, as she was one of the stanchest yachts on fresh water.

Early the next morning the judges at Mackinac were busy receiving wires from the boats which had put in to port and expected to finish the race when the weather let up. All but six yachts were accounted for, and along about nine o'clock in the morning these six sent word by wireless from different islands behind which they had taken refuge. "The *Dolphin* a total wreck on Fisherman's Reef with her skipper drowned," was the only gloomy tidings of the day, for all the rest of the boats and their crews were accounted for.

THE unsheltered wharf at Mackinac is a cheerless place when the wind is blowing through the Straits at fifty or sixty miles an hour. But still the judges had to stick to their post, as some of the larger yachts had determined to start anew with the coming of daylight.

They kept a close lookout on the western horizon, for none could tell just what boat would show, and the betting was keen on the result of the three-hundred-and-thirty-mile race. A big schooner was first to cross the line, and her crew showed the effects of the race.

The weather was beginning to clear up. The wind was decreasing in velocity, but there was a tall swell rolling through the Straits.

Shortly after nine o'clock in the morning a second sail was seen in the offing, and conjecture ran wild as to what it could be. One of the racers of a surety, but whether a schooner, sloop or yawl could not immediately be made out.

But a sixty-mile wind sends a vessel over the water pretty fast. The wind had shifted clear around to the west, and this was favorable to the yachts that were seaworthy enough to take up the race again.

"It's a sloop!" cried Bill Campbell, one of the judges, as he caught the speck in his powerful glasses. "She's traveling under storms'l and storm-jib. She's a big one, too, from the look of her spar. Would say she were the *Dolphin* if that craft were still on the water."

They eagerly awaited the approach of the sloop. On she came like an express train.

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She could have carried more canvas, but still she was making fast time of it.

"By heavens, if it isn't the *Dolphin*, it's her sister ship!" called Campbell. "That telegram looks straight enough, though, and Sexton said she had gone down."

With soaking sails and drenched deck, on came the mysterious yacht. There was but one man visible on her decks. Only his head showed above the combing of the cockpit. Straight for the line she came, and she had the Straits to herself, for there was not another craft visible.

A sister ship of the *Dolphin* she certainly was, for all who knew the late lamented craft swore to her similarity. Across the line boomed the giant single-sticker, and though they instinctively glanced at the watches they failed to give her the gun. The yacht sped on past the judges, and then her lone commander brought her up into the wind and she lost way.

The furious breeze caught her in its teeth and thrust her toward the shore. All eyes were on the boat, for they wondered how the lone sailor composing the crew could bring the boat to anchor in such a gale. He took a hitch round the stick and stumbled forward. He was a little fellow, and then a great truth dawned upon the watchers. They saw the painted name on the stern: *Dolphin*, spelled out in large letters of gold! A great roar went up, and they hurried into motor-boats to assist Captain Willy, for it was he who alone had brought the sloop over the line.

But Willy wasn't idle. When he had made his tiller fast he plunged forward and with quick strokes of a knife cut away the lashings of the hook. He grasped a capstan-bar and heaved the anchor overboard. It stuck, and the yacht was held off the shore, though the cable was stretched to its tautest.

By this time a motor-boat had reached the side of the big sloop and they took Willy aboard. Then some one remembered they had forgotten to fire the gun, and they gave the gentle little skipper an admiral's salute. They hauled the *Dolphin* into smooth water and made her fast. They rushed Willy into the shelter of the spacious hotel and asked him a thousand questions.

"It's nothing at all, nothing at all," declared Willy, as gentle and smiling and modest as ever. "But begging everybody's pardon, I shall be at your service as soon as I can get into some dry clothes and have a bite to eat."

FINALLY they got the story out of him. When the crew was being taken off the *Dolphin*, Willy went below. He meant to stick by the yacht, for he knew she was strong, and there was a chance, if the wind shifted, that she would blow off the reef.

That was exactly what she did, not more than an hour after the life-savers had left the boat. Willy managed to get a storm jib and a stormsail on her, and was able to get her under command. She had not taken any water for all her pounding, and then the little skipper conceived the idea of running her right through and trying to win the race without a crew.

He passed the motor-boat returning for him, but said no word, for if the wind held favorable, he would be able to run through the Straits without touching a sheet.

His only anxiety was caused by the difficulty he expected to have in coming to anchor, as the handling of a thirty-ton racing sloop is no child's play even if she is under short canvas.

He was lucky to pick up a steamer which was making its way down the Straits. Willy hung to this boat through the night and when daylight broke he picked up the Waugachance lighthouse, and the rest of it was easy.

But it was typical of the little yachtsman that he was all apologies for the fact that he had run away from his crew, as he expressed it. Never a word of blame did he have for them. Nor did he blame his delay on Fisherman's Reef for costing him the race.

Six-footers and five-footers all have the same respect now for the diminutive Captain of the *Dolphin*. Needless to say, he now runs his ship from truck to keelson. And the best of them are proud to sail under Captain Willy's orders.

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Lost Mines of the Great Southwest

by Joe Minster from data by H.J. West

THE LOST DUTCH-OVEN MINE

WHEN the railroads built their transcontinental systems, one of their greatest difficulties lay in the supply of water for the men who were working on the projects. Great wagon-trains were frequently essential to bring sufficient of the supply to make work for a week at a time possible. Even after the completion of the roads there was difficulty in obtaining water for the purpose of supplying the engines or the little stations necessary wherever there was a siding.

In order to secure water in abundance, the Santa Fé Railroad had ordered a tunnel bored in the Clipper range, located in San Bernardino County from eight to ten miles northwest of Danby, the station to which it was to be piped if discovered in a large quantity. This all happened within a score of years. The man who volunteered for the work, a competent mining man, who was well acquainted with the sinking of shafts and the boring of tunnels, was Thomas Schofield of Los Angeles.

Tiring of work one day in early June of 1894, he started on a prospecting trip, something which he did whenever he felt in need of relaxation. He wandered into one of the canyons close at hand and discovered there a spring. What to him was more surprising and even startling was the trail that led up the canyon, stopping at the watering-place.

The trail, at times very indistinct because of the solid rock formation, led over three or four small hills, the hogback of two ranges and then into another canyon. This he followed until it ended in a blank wall and he realized that the trail had been lost. Going back a short distance he discovered it winding up the side of the hill. It led to two immense rocks, rivaling the towers of an old English castle. They seemed to form the portal to the wealth beyond, and nature had set them so closely together that they allowed just sufficient passageway to permit a burro well packed to enter.

And just beyond the portal stood an isolated rock. There beside the black boulder of enormous size stood the shreds of what had been a camp. The wooden upright supports were still standing, and draped from them, floating in the breeze, were the shreds of what had been a tent. Brush had been carefully piled up around the sides. Inside there was a bench of boughs, still covered with a blanket, which was, like the tent covering, dilapidated and ragged. The stillness of the place and the fact that man had been making his habitation there struck Schofield like a blow from a fist.

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A pile of railroad ties, a number of rusty old axes which had been used as wedges for splitting the ties for lagging, a few other mining tools and some badly decomposed food still lay about the place, indicating very sudden abandonment of the camp by its owner. The most conspicuous of all things about the place was an old-fashioned, heavily rusted Dutch oven, the largest Schofield had ever seen and a trifle over two feet in diameter. So oppressive was the place and so nerve-racking the immediate strain, that he continued on the trail which led away from the camp.

JUST a short distance away he came to a shaft where considerable work had been done. It was sunk upon a series of small stringers that ran parallel to one another for a long distance and at intervals of about six inches. He counted twelve of these peculiar formations in the rock and they were of almost solid gold! He tested them, "horning" great strings of coarse gold.

The surrounding ore was of an indigo-blue quartz formation, and "to me the stringers, passing through the dark porphyry, appeared a bed of roses of golden hues hidden in the depths of a giant bed of violets," said Schofield in telling of his discovery. "I traced these lines of high-grade ore for a distance of nearly three thousand feet, and found them widening and enlarging as they went. They interested me so that I failed to notice for hours that the day was fast waning and that I would be forced to remain there overnight.

"The mystery, the awe and even the fear of that night I shall never forget. Was I in the haunt of a robber crew who had found wealth far richer than could be obtained from their nefarious trade in the city? Had the owners been cruelly murdered and their wealth carried off by some one else? Was I the victim of some strange phantasmagoria, or would I waken to find all the wealth and the adventure of the day a dream? These and countless other suggestions coursed through my throbbing brain, and I slept little that night.

"In the morning I explored the shaft at the first light of breaking sun above the jagged sky-line of broken peaks. I found that the shaft had been sunk to possibly seventy or eighty feet, that it was equipped with a windlass, rope and bucket and that it had been well timbered all the way to the bottom. Outside I discovered a large pile of ore, indicative of the fact that little or none of the product of the mine had ever been carried away.

"After gathering a number of fine samples and a large quantity of the horned gold, I went back to the camp and there again I was attracted by the Dutch oven. Something seemed to draw me toward it. It contained gold! Half of it was full of the product and there was I unable to cart it away. All marks of those who resided there were of such an old stamp that I never thought whether it would be right or wrong. The idea of possession of so much wealth nearly overwhelmed me, and after grasping some of it I started back to the camp by the tunnel, planning a trip to Los Angeles to see whether it was really gold that I had found."

And when Schofield had his ore and his metal tested he found that it was the real article and that he had made himself richer by several hundred dollars with just the small amount he had been able to lug out on his person. It fired him with the desire to return at once and obtain all of the treasure if the right owners had not returned. But he has never been able to get back to the Dutch oven!

In coming back from the mine he had paid little heed to the general direction taken. He had followed the trail blindly on his way up and again on his return journey. Consequently after a number of weeks, when he returned with a partner to look for the treasure and found that some terrific rains and even a waterspout had been ahead of him, his plans became hazy. The water had obliterated all signs of a trail and his knowledge of getting back was gone with it. He had even forgotten the general direction, and in the years that have followed he has never been able to discover the towers of rock, the solitary mass of granite where the camp stood, or the mouth of the tunnel and the ore-heap that lay before it.

He told friends and they in turn told others of the wonderful Dutch oven. In the annals of mining, no one has ever heard of a wonderfully rich discovery in the Clipper Range. There are no mining men who speak of the place knowingly as having worked it or worked with those who had worked it. The camp remains a mystery,

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and were it not for the wealth that Schofield brought back with him, his story might never have gained the credence that it has. He is still living, and tells with great enthusiasm the manner of his discovery, but puts on the soft pedal when it comes to his loss. The gold would have meant so much in the worldly goods and his family's comforts at this time.

LOST TUB PLACER

MEN will sacrifice love, life, virtue and kindred things if there is a great opportunity presented for the accumulation of sudden wealth. Strange alliances, stories of murder, long legal fights and bitterest enmity have grown up in the Southwest as adjuncts to the continued hunt for treasure. Among the strange stories that are more widely known is that which has to do with a lost placer of great riches.

It finds its origin in the early eighties, either 1883 or 1884, when a white man, a lone prospector, wandered into the camp of the Piute Indians at Piute Bend on the Nevada side of the Colorado River. The bend lay only a few miles above Fort Mohave, and it is there that Jamison, which is generally given as the man's name, gathered his first inklings of the storied wealth accumulated by several members of the tribe.

They were said to know of several great gold deposits in the desert and mountain country contiguous to their place of living, and from these they frequently brought to Fort Mohave splendid specimens of nuggets and gold-dust. This gold they traded for a half or third of its actual value, buying the baubles and the gaudy apparel so dear to the heart of the red man. It also led occasionally to serious trouble, attempts of unscrupulous whites to obtain their secrets, sometimes even by force, usually by some chicanery.

Jamison took a course which brought him in direct and continued contact with all members of the tribe. He married one of the squaws, and after a year or two of living with the Indians gained many of their secrets. To his brother-in-law he was indebted for the discovery of an immensely rich placer. To reach it at all seasons of the year was apparently impossible.

"We shall wait till the snow falls and covers all the land," said the red brother to Jamison.

They waited for two years for such a time to come, snow not being a usual thing in that portion of the country every year. And when it came, the Indian took his adopted tribesman for a long journey, to a place of three peaks and a place where no water was obtainable, save through melting the snow, and there they gathered from beneath the white cloak much gravel, and carried it back to the camp of the Indians in three days.

Feeling assured, then, of the wealth he was to gather, Jamison wrote an old Eastern friend whose name has been lost. It is said to have been Fields. He told Fields all about the wonderful gravel, and so excited his desire for riches that within a few months Fields had arrived at Fort Mohave. Jamison left the Indians with the excuse that he had to look after particular business in California.

Then with Fields he went to Homer, a station on the Santa Fé Railroad in San Bernardino County, California. There they purchased a span of good mules with some of the gold that Jamison had saved from his first trip, and they loaded an old buckboard with a barrel of water and a few provisions and started out, driving south into Homer Wash. From all reports they probably traveled forty miles that day and night, arriving at the diggings early the next morning.

"There we climbed a mesa," said Fields, telling of the discovery in after years. "And on top of this proceeded with our work, which merely consisted in scraping the gravel in heaps and panning it in a tub which Jamison had brought along for the purpose. The water which had been left in the barrel was used in the tub. The gravel was nearly half gold, so rich that it nearly stunned us. We became careless in our work, picking off only the coarse gold and the nuggets, and dumped the residue of fine gold and dust into the tub. It was far too much work to pan it clean."

Want of water, the bugaboo that has menaced every prospector at one time or another in the Southwest, came upon them at nightfall when they were forced to give to the two mules the water that had been used for panning. It was less than enough to quench their thirst, and in half panic the two miners cached their tub, half full

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of dust, and their gold pan in a small cave which they had discovered in one of the little canyons leading off the mesa.

THEN came their retreat, as ignominious as any that ever befell an army. With all their wealth they were forced to run. A panic seemed to overtake them and they jogged their mules through the desert night, trying to get to Homer before the break of day and the heat that came with it in that Summer period. With coming of dawn they found themselves in a sad plight. They had lost the trail entirely, were in a country new to them, had not a drop of water and scarcely a handful of food.

Then came the struggle with death, the terrific strain to retain the balance of their mentality against the worriment of a thousand imps of heat and of wavering lights and shadows that dance in the shimmery waving light of the desert and drive to distraction and ultimate madness. All day long they forced their mules, stopping only long enough to catch breath and renew their fast-waning strength.

They had to fight the mules onward, the animals balking and becoming more obdurate at every step. This sapped strength, and when chill night came, with its horrors of ghostly visions, they continued to struggle on, resting only two or three hours and then moving forward to meet the coming dawn.

With breaking light came hope. Way off in the distance they discerned the guidepost that has led to many a salvation in the desert wastes: telegraph poles strung at regular intervals. To reach them and the railroad tracks they marked was their aim. Through three hours of tortuous work, walking instead of trying to ride behind the worn-out mules, they struggled on, their tongues lolling black from out their mouths, their throats burned to a cinder crispness, their eyes bulging in continued effort and strain.

And reaching the railroad, they could discern, just a short distance to the right, a few straggling buildings, some little outpost of civilization, with promise of water if nothing more. And this they reached eventually, pulling their mules behind them. They were found by an old miner who happened on to the broad wooden platform of the only bar in Blake during the noon siesta of the town. They were more dead than alive, and it took several hours of hard work to bring them to. For two days they were out of their minds.

Their first thought on coming to was their gold. Had they lost it? Had it been stolen? They directed search for it in the wagon, and there it lay in a large canvas sack, untouched by the men who had cared for the mules. When it was weighed, the men found themselves in possession of fifteen thousand dollars for a single day's work! The story of their find made Blake a deserted village in a few hours. A stampede for gold was on. For days and weeks it continued, but never successfully. Their trail had been obliterated in the winds that continually sway the sand from dune to dune and obliterate ceaselessly through ages.

It was a week before Jamison and Fields could travel. They packed up at the end of that time and in their swaying buckboard they drove to Needles, where Fields with his share of the gold started for the East to secure capital for development. Jamison turned his mules back to Homer then, and on back to the Piute Bend to his Indians, arriving there in a delirium caused by a relapse into fever acquired on the trip from the diggings. His squaw nursed him tenderly and medicine-men of the tribe gave him herbs, but Jamison died.

Fields came back when he heard of this. He had a chicken heart induced by past experiences, and nothing would induce him to start out alone on quest of the wealth that lay hidden in the desert near the three peaks.

He sent other men for him, giving them a map of the country as he had conceived it, but they all failed in the relocation of the treasure. Eventually he returned home, but for several years continued to write to mining men, offering them half of his interest if they could, with the aid of his map, discover the dry placer.

From one of the mining men it has been learned that the location of three peaks has not been so very difficult. Apparently they lie forty miles or so south of Homer, at the northern end of the Turtle Range. Because of the impossibility of obtaining water, more than two or three days' sojourn in the district has never been possible, and this has precluded a thorough examination of the territory. Somewhere within the

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region lies the immensely rich deposit. Gold has been found in all of the district in varying quantities. The Lost Tub and its contents and the mesa with its wealth are still awaiting the lucky prospector.

THE GOLER PLACER DIGGINGS

THREE men rode leisurely out of the Panamint Range of mountains at the edge of that famous sink of mystery, Death Valley, and on across country toward San Bernardino, their destination. They were all on good horses, had ample packs, and ten-gallon water canteens. They rode through the heat of the day, their horses kicking up the dust of the desert and leaving behind a continuous hazy vapor which always distinguishes anything of life that moves in the desert wastes.

During the heat of the day they stopped to camp in the shade of their horses, which were watered and fed. Soon they started on. This time there was not the same certainty, the same equanimity, among them, and a quarrel arose as to the proper direction to take. They quarreled all that afternoon, and finding their water-supply practically all gone on the following morning, their words almost resulted in blows. They separated.

One of them, Frank Goler, struck out alone in an easterly direction while the other two went south. Where these two went, whatever happened to them or even the memory of their names, has been added to the many mysteries of that desert country. It was the last time they appeared alive, and in all probability succumbed to thirst and heat.

By noon of the second day, Goler had arrived at a series of low hills that lay directly in his path. He crossed them, and on the farther side discovered a canyon into which he plunged without the least fear and with renewed hope of salvation. It contained abundant vegetation, and what was more than all the rest, it carried in its deepest embrace a little mountain stream.

Arriving at its banks, Goler, nearly delirious from lack of water, gave his horse its freedom and dropped to the edge of the stream and began lapping up the cool, bright water. And while he drank, the rays of the sun, penetrating the foliage of an overhanging cottonwood, glinted upon something on the bottom of the stream—something yellow just beyond the touch of his lips.

It was a nugget weighing several ounces. There were others near it, and Goler, bewildered at his good fortune, pulled forth three of the pieces of gold and then stopped to think of food, for he had not taken nourishment for more than a day. The thought of how much longer he would be forced to travel without sustenance brought fear into his vitals. The gold suddenly lost its charm, his find dwindled into a nothingness as compared with his life and he was seized by a sudden panic to get away.

He tucked the nuggets into the bosom of his shirt, caught his horse, mounted, and then proceeded with all possible speed down the canyon, taking little time even to make proper survey of the location of the treasure. Finally, after several hours of rough riding he came out upon a plain. Just ahead of him he saw what apparently had been the bed of a big body of water.

It was all dried out and lay in a straight easterly line with Mount San Antonio, or Mount Baldy, as it is more generally known in the Southwest. The snow-capped peak gave Goler encouragement, and also indicated the proper direction to the little mining town at the foot of the famous Arrowhead, where the Indians found relief from many ills in the waters that purled from several springs.

It required another day for him to reach this place, and when he did he was completely exhausted and his horse fearfully jaded and ready to collapse. The nuggets had worn holes in his garments and rubbed through the skin, causing serious sore places because of the fact that the alkali of the desert and fiber from his garments had worked into the wounds.

THREE weeks elapsed before he had fully recovered, and then he showed the treasures that he had collected.

"Why, there is enough of this stuff to load several wagons where I found it, and I am going to bring in a load in less than a month," he assured some of his friends.

He at once set out to fit up a wagon with broad-rimmed wheels, light canvas top and a team of sturdy horses.

The day he set out, a large gathering watched him off and several prospectors followed, hoping to be in on the wealth that

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he had discovered. In a few days they returned, disgusted with the fact that Goler apparently did not know whither he was traveling. In a month he came back tired out and disgruntled because he had been unable to relocate the same chain of hills and the hidden waters. Six different times he went in search of his wealth and always returned with the same story—one of reverses and loss, until finally he had spent all of the money he had accumulated in a lifetime and had to give up the quest.

It is generally conceded that the Goler discovery has since been found. His first location was in 1886. In 1891 an old and odd character, Hen Moss, who made his home in San Bernardino, started out on one of his regular prospecting trips. One of his burros wandered away from the other three, and Moss started to follow the lost animal with his entire train. It led the motley aggregation of life toward some hills in the desert which had never been carefully examined, because they were supposedly dry and afforded little opportunity for prospecting for any length of time.

The wandering burro found a canyon and in it water, and in this way led Moss to the discovery of a gold deposit. In a few hours he panned out several ounces of dust with his horn spoon and also found two or three fair-sized nuggets. The discovery went to his head. He failed to place his locating stakes and hurried back to San Bernardino to celebrate his good fortune.

For several days a very intoxicated old man swayed the entire community with his lavish expenditure of gold-dust and nuggets. When it had been consumed in this manner he had time to sober up and come to a realization of his folly.

With borrowed capital he fitted up a second time, and when he left town he might have been mistaken at a distance for the Pied Piper of Hamelin. More than half the male inhabitants of San Bernardino were at his back, all equipped for a long journey with pack train or on horse.

Moss tried to throw them off his trail, doubled on them, returned to San Bernardino, but all to no avail.

"Guess I might as well take you along," he said one day when his patience had been frazzled to a rag.

This time he proceeded directly to the distant range in the open desert. And when he neared the canyon, those who were following him realized the nearness of the end of their journey. Moss spurred his horse ahead and left his pack train to care for itself. There were better horses in that group, and race as he might, his hand unsteady and his saddle not so well filled as others, he was overtaken and passed.

THE stampeded prospectors, filled with lust for gold, had reached their goal, and old Hen Moss was one of the last to arrive on the ground of his discovery. He staked what proved to be the poorest claim of all the eighty that were staked out. The men all figured that they had come to the old Goler discovery, and therefore they so named the district, which was at once organized. The Goler District is located in what is now Kern County, California, about twenty-eight miles north of Mojave, a little mining town on the Southern Pacific.

The creek proved one of the richest ever found in California. Several hundred thousand dollars were taken from a comparatively small area. In places the wealth was phenomenal, nuggets worth more than a thousand dollars each having been picked up with such frequency that they ceased to be special objects of interest. There were not enough of them, however, to fill a wagon. Goler was mistaken in a degree because of the fact that much of the creek-bed was filled with a very peculiar rock, one similar to all appearances to gold, but which lacked its weight and turned out to be the well-known fool's gold which has tricked many an amateur miner.

Moss did not lose courage, however. Seeing the great riches developed by those about him, he became disgusted with his little finds and finally packed up and set out. He discovered in the same range Red Rock Canyon, sometimes called "Bonanza Gulch" because of the gold it contained.

For a time he had acquired forethought, and he located the entire gulch before ever giving an inkling of what he had done. He went over the entire length of gulch, about three thousand feet, and amassed a fortune, for it produced an ounce of gold to every linear foot of the entire distance. His newly acquired wealth did him no good, as has been often related in the case of miners who have come upon their wealth suddenly: he squandered it all.

When he returned to San Bernardino or

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to Mojave, he delighted in bewildering the denizens of the place by his wonderful show of wealth. He would fill a quart pickle bottle with gold, and after a few drinks would throw his nuggets through the windows of some saloon merely to watch the people scramble.

He died only four or five years ago, a pauper who had lived in his declining years on the charity of his friends.

THE LOST GUN-SIGHT MINE

THIS perhaps has led to as many deaths as all of the other lost mining properties together, for the reason that the Lost Gun-sight Mine has been located by its original discoverer somewhere in Death Valley, the dread sink of waterless waste that has been the basis of many a blood-curdling yarn of fabulous discoveries that have never been made public and of strange disappearances through a period of forty years.

This discovery, unlike most of the other lost mine discoveries, had silver of almost virgin purity as the basis of its worth instead of gold. Nor was the discovery a little ledge, a few veins or massive nuggets. It was a solid mountain of black sulphurets of silver located somewhere in the southern portion of the Panamint Range, and had its origin in the tale brought to the Southern California towns by a band of immigrants who had nearly lost their lives from lack of water in the valley of perpetual despair.

One of their number, Joseph Bennett, was the first to reach the confines of that mysterious waste which stretches in length for one hundred and twenty-eight miles, and at its widest portion for twenty-seven miles, void of nearly every semblance of vegetation and containing but two or three springs of water.

Bennett was more adventurous than others of the party of immigrants and acted as trail-blazer. He wandered sometimes a day in advance of the others on the trip westward. And one day he wandered so far ahead that his water gave out and he was unable to retrace his steps. Nearly famished, he chased from one phantom spring to another, finally coming upon a real one, which since that time has been known as Bennett's Hole and which has proved the salvation of many a prospector.

From there, after a day's rest, Bennett made his way back into the range that came to the edge of the desert and circled with them some twenty miles to the westward, finding eventually a good spring of water. There were a few trees, live-oaks and willows, surrounding the spring, and, suffering still from the days of his ceaseless chase for water, he remained there a week. It was on one of these days that he happened to notice the metallic quality of some of the rock that surrounded him.

He made closer investigation, and although lacking all sense of the prospector and with no mining experience to tell him right, he realized that he had stumbled upon a wonderful deposit of silver. The croppings came from a number of ledges and were all black with the corrosion of some sulphate. He broke off a number of large chunks of the metal and then started again on his journey to a place of civilization.

That journey, like many others of similar character, has gone down in history as one of fearful hardships, despair of ever arriving at a goal, and, during the final days of struggle, despair of ever finding water or food again. He was discovered by another prospector and brought into Needles more dead than alive, but still clinging to the silver that he had found.

For weeks he was insane, and when he finally came back to his senses he had lost all reckoning of distance traversed or the exact locality of the immense silver deposit. When he had sufficiently recovered he started out to relocate the property. He failed a second and third time in his endeavor.

On the last two trips he made he carried with him a gun on which he placed his faith for unerring aim. He purchased the gun, an old rifle, from a miner who was down and out, and the weapon having no sight, he had the blacksmith fashion one from the silver ore which he carried. With this he wandered through mountains and valley after valley, hoping to be able to shoot into the ledge which contained the original metal of the sight. He failed, as did his friends who attempted to follow his directions.

A record of a score of deaths has been laid to this discovery because of the men who have started out for it and have never returned, leaving perhaps their bones to dry out and blow away on the parched sands of Death Valley.

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A Romance of New York and Teheran

by Grace Sartwell Mason and John Northern Hilliard

SYNOPSIS—Judith Gray, stenographer in a New York hotel, her home a boarding-house, lives her real life in dreams of adventure and even writes thrilling books, not for the small financial returns, but because she has to. There comes to the hotel John Savidge, world-wanderer and civil engineer. He appreciates Judy's fineness and her passion for adventure. During his brief stay the two become friends, and she learns that he is the confidential agent of big American financial interests backing a proposed Trans-Persian railway. Owing to the hostility of the Russian Government, he has had to work in secret and to leave hidden in Persia the plans for the route. He takes the girl's first name for the key to a secret cipher. Wolkonsky, high in the Russian secret service, appears in the hotel, and Savidge, quick in his decisions, suddenly persuades Judy to marry him and taste real adventure—in Persia. Courtship and marriage occupy only a few hours, and they leave at once for the Orient, as comrades rather than man and wife, though Savidge is in love with Judy. In Tiflis Savidge knocks down a servant of the Khadkhuda, or chief magistrate, for having jostled against Judy. About to take train for Akstafa, Savidge is arrested by Wolkonsky on the technical charge of assault, but slips a note to Judy telling her to wait two weeks in Ispahan and then, if he is still detained, to go on with his trusted servant, Abdullah ibh Hassan, to the buried city where he has hidden the plans. A term of endearment escapes Judy, and Savidge leaps on the train long enough to kiss her. At Akstafa the station-agent claims there is no cipher telegram from Savidge, but Jaggard, a wandering American magician, scares him by "magic" into giving it to Judy: "See Gholam Rezah in Tabriz." Jaggard attaches himself to her service. Lina Arlundsen introduces herself to Judy as the buyer of a large Paris house, but Jaggard suspects her.

CHAPTER XIII

ON THE TRAIL OF A THOUSAND YEARS

THE sun, shouldering above the huddled mountains, left a blotch of blood-red upon the stark blue of the snow-peaks, glinted on the arms of the caravan guard, and turned the crimson pennon of the leader into a moving flame. Like a huge caterpillar the caravan crawled out of the town and across the yellow, rutty plain—first the swift-footed Bactrian camels carrying merchants that swayed in their blankets and smoked the morning pipe; then the one-humped baggage beasts of Khorasan, chained in strings of eight and ten, mumbling and grunting under their six-hundred-pound loads; then the pilgrims riding shaggy Persian ponies, and last the tiny donkeys swaying under stupendous loads—pots and pans, guns and accouterments, clanking against their sides.

Here and there a donkey jogged along, bearing the wives of a merchant. They rode in wooden panniers strapped to the donkey's sides, two and two, their dark eyes looking out over the *yashmak*, under the shadow of the pannier's wooden hood. Judy pitied them profoundly as she rode by on her

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pony to her place in the cavalcade; and they in turn looked at her unveiled face with scorn and derision.

Often before the journey was done she was to hear them chattering, chattering, in their cramped cages; but never once did she see more of them than a brown, beringed hand, or their eyes above the eternal *yashmak*.

The starting forth in the diamond-clear cold of the morning with the clamor of attendant beggars, the barking of caravan dogs, the chattering of pilgrims and the clank of accouterments stirred her blood as well as her imagination. As she looked back over the long string of laden beasts, she felt suddenly the amazing contrast between her little, modern self and this world-old spectacle.

They followed an age-worn trail that is older than any man can say. Since the world was young the caravans have made their way over this road that links together cities counting a thousand years as but a fraction in their history. Over it Ghengis Khan rode at the head of his Mongol horde and Timur the Tartar led his barbarian host. Semiramis made the long journey in royal splendor; and it may be that down this winding course the Amazonian Tomyris rode when she planned her vengeance on Cyrus the King, under the same stars that still watch the caravans filing down from Transcaspia to the seas of spouting whales that lie to the south of the Province of the Sun.

FOR nearly three weeks they followed the long trail; and the days slipped behind them like the processions of inscrutable figures carved in the everlasting stone of the tombs and palaces that accent the loneliness of the land. To Judy, some of the days seemed to dwarf a century; others might have been as old as the sun-scoured land itself. There was little to disturb the journey. As ancient as the trail itself is the routine of a caravan day.

First the gay and noisy start, then, with the coming of the heat, the settling down to a drowsy hum of conversation, the complaining grunts of the camels and the steady pad-padding of their feet. At midday, the halt at a *chapar-khanah*, a hasty meal and the long siesta. Then, when the afternoon grows a little cooler, the setting forth again for the last march of the day, silent under the heat, swinging on through the dusty hours until the walls of the next post-house break the horizon and a long sigh of relief rises from the weary caravan.

At dawn the desert glittered like diamonds; at noon the land lay warped and wrinkled under a blazing sun; at eventide a cold wind sprang up and the hills, huddled on the horizon like backs of porpoises at sea, took on a hundred hues and colors. Under the light of sunset the rocks glittered like rubies and opals and amethysts.

Day after day it was the same—a deliberate, patient procession across the yellow plain dotted with clumps of sagebrush and camel's-foot, with long lines of cactus and aloe standing saw-toothed against the lapis-lazuli of the sky. Sometimes the caravan crawled along the bank of a salt lake shimmering like quicksilver; sometimes it skirted a marsh where cranes stalked among the sedges, and coots called to one another from the reeds. Again it zigzagged through a rich valley, the slopes of which were dotted with the black goats'-hair tents of nomads.

In front of the tents tawny, naked children romped, while in the valley their elders guarded the camels and the asses, the little gray cattle with humps on their shoulders, and the shag-haired ponies.

Now and then they met a caravan on the road—the camels wobbling in single file, each beast fastened with a long cord from a ring in its nose to the saddle of the one ahead. More than once they encountered bands of wandering dervishes, wild-eyed smokers of hemp and bhang, their unkempt locks dyed with henna juice, their garments ragged and travel-stained. One afternoon the sky became suddenly black with crows and carrion-birds. As the kites poised on motionless wings over the caravan, Judy noticed that the natives drew their blankets over their faces. She turned inquiring eyes on Jaggard, who rode beside her.

"A caravan of the dead is coming," he said.

Judy shivered.

"What do you mean?"

"One of the nice little customs of this benighted country! Remember what our fuzzy friend, the station-agent at Akstafa, said about his being a *Meshadi?* He meant that he had made a pilgrimage to the holy city of Meshed; and when he dies he expects his devoted wife to bundle his bones

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into a box and ship him by mule or camel train to the sacred city. Probably the corpse caravan ahead of us is on its way to one of the holy cities now."

THE slow-moving line of camels, each with an oblong box or two strapped to its back, made a somber silhouette against the sky. And overhead the sinister birds were black against the sun.

"It fits in with the land," said Judy. "Some way, down here life and death seem nearer to each other—and the world is so old nothing matters."

"Oho! the fatalism of this blooming land is getting into your bones, is it?" Jaggard smiled. "Cheer up, Mrs. Savidge! Think of the stories you can write when you hit Broadway again."

Stories! She had something else to think about, at last. The days were forever gone when the people and events of her own imaginings were more real to her than the men and women in the world around her. To be sure, these days with the caravan were unreal, like scenes from an ancient tapestry; but new horizons seemed opening to her soul's eyes; out of the dreams and visions of the old days something truer and saner was emerging; she was becoming a woman—a little touched by awe and wonder at the change in herself, but awake at last to the meaning of life and love.

She had plenty of time to think in the long, monotonous days; and she was inclined to be severe with herself in the light of her new wisdom. She told herself that when she married John Savidge because she wanted to see the world and taste adventure she had behaved contemptibly, even if she had been honest in making no pretense to any higher motive. She agreed with herself that he would be justified in despising her, under the circumstances.

But when she got to this point she could never honestly feel the contrition and shame she believed she should feel, for there came always the remembrance of her husband's kiss as he stood in the door of the train at Tiflis; and from that kiss she knew, as even the most inexperienced woman always knows, that he loved her. The thought sang in her heart.

She would not acknowledge to herself that she was falling in love with her own husband; but she did own that something that had made the days in Tiflis golden, something that had thrown over them the glamour of true romance, was missing now. Many times a day she turned and looked wistfully behind her, over the diminishing trail; for so strong was her belief that not even Wolkonsky could obstruct the way of John Savidge long, that every cloud of dust on the horizon made her heart leap with hope.

One afternoon they were overtaken by a company of hard-riding Cossacks. When they had swept by, she realized in the sinking of her heart how keenly she had been hoping that among them there would be the one man without whom there seemed something lacking even in the gorgeous pageantry of a desert sunset.

"Well, I'm doing my best!" she consoled herself. "I'm carrying out his orders; I'm helping in the Game!"

And her hand went to a packet wrapped in silk and strung about her neck with a ribbon underneath her blouse—the map of Persepolis, the Lost City, and the directions in cipher by which she was to find the survey-maps should Savidge be detained too long to fetch them himself.

CHAPTER XIV

"IT IS THE WILL OF ALLAH"

WITHOUT Tom Jaggard the long journey would have been maddening in its deliberate progress. The Great Jaggard was a never-failing source of anecdote, of droll observations on the passing show, of light-hearted conversation which sped many an hour that would otherwise have dragged intolerably. He had made himself Judy's special knight-errant; but to every one alike he talked, from the muleteers to Mohammed Mirzi of Ispahan, who traveled with ten thousand dollars' worth of carpets and four wives, and he boasted that he had even extracted a giggle from behind the curtains of a *kajaveh!*

Also he laid imperturbable siege to the fastnesses of Miss Arlundsen's eyes. The Oriental buyer for Rosenthal had taken charge of Judy, of Jaggard and of Hassan before the journey was twenty-four hours old. Not officiously, but quietly and as a matter of course, she took them under her efficient wing.

She had a superb *savoir-faire*, and a genius

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for spreading comfort around her that transformed even the most cheerless rest-house. It happened that at the end of the first day's journey, Judy had to be lifted from her horse. Sunburnt, powdered with white dust, too stiff to walk, she sank down upon the rugs Hassan spread for her in a sheltered corner, and with the most amazing swiftness fell asleep.

When she awakened, Miss Arlundsen had taken deft command of the situation. With a native *batterie de cuisine*, a pot of charcoal and a samovar, she had achieved a dinner that was not far short of a miracle. Hassan was as wax in her hands; her own servants were well-trained genii. Under her cool blue gaze they served a *pilau*, a roasted partridge, and a compote of apricots. Miss Arlundsen herself made the coffee; and one sip of it reduced Jaggard to a state of awed admiration.

As long as she lived, Judy never forgot that first night with the caravan—the kneeling camels black against the sunset, the bearded men waiting their turn at the windlass of a thousand-year-old well, the glow of smoky dung-fires striking upward on the faces of the low-caste women as they cooked the evening meal; the turquoise and flamingo tints of the sky, and over her head the first star blazing out.

The tired beasts ate with grunts and mumblings of satisfaction, the caravan dogs frisked, drivers shouted and told long-winded yarns, and behind the half-drawn curtains of the *kajavehs* women dropped their veils and bandied jests that would have brought a blush to the cheek of the Porter of Bagdad.

A *chapar-khanah* is the most comfortless apology for a night's lodging imaginable; but before Miss Arlundsen's ingenuity discomforts melted away. She showed Judy how to transform a niche in a stone wall into a workable boudoir; how to make a dressing-table from saddle-bags and a hand mirror; how best to arrange her sleeping-rugs, and how to save her complexion from the harsh ravages of sun and wind.

She taught her how to wear her pugaree and how to ride to save herself fatigue. When they came to a caravanserai that was too hot or too dirty or too crowded for a European woman to sleep in, Miss Arlundsen had her men pitch Judy's small tent close to her own so that she should not be lonely or afraid. In a hundred small ways she made herself invaluable as a fellow traveler; and yet she never pressed her services upon Judy. She had always her cool air of detachment; she talked a little—she was in fact a rather silent person; but sometimes, over their evening meal, an episode from Jaggard's Odyssey would set her to talking of the countries she had seen and the cities she had lived in from St. Petersburg to Singapore.

In these rare moments, Judy's eyes would be two sea-green wells of admiration, while Tom Jaggard would watch the Oriental representative of Rosenthal with a certain twinkling speculation in his shrewd face. As he put it to himself, he couldn't quite "get her number!" There was something about Miss Lina Arlundsen he did not quite understand; but nevertheless he regarded her frankly as the most amazingly clever woman he had ever met.

FINALLY there came a night when the caravan made its last halt at a *serai* ten miles from Tabriz, and the end of the long journey was in sight. That evening even the camels and donkeys seemed to realize that the end of the trail was near. There was a joyful hubbub as the drivers unloaded their charges for the night.

The excitement that thrills through passengers at sea when land is in sight seemed to take possession of men and beasts alike. Tom Jaggard and even Miss Arlundsen caught the contagion, and Judy's spirits soared at thought of the next day. She felt certain there would be a letter or at least a telegram for her in Tabriz. What in her inmost heart she really wanted was a letter from her husband bidding her wait for him in Tabriz. She had had enough of adventuring alone; and the weight of the packet she carried increased day by day until it seemed to lie heavy on her heart.

But before she reached the end of that stage of her long journey, Judy was to learn her first lesson in the playing of the Game, and was to get her first taste of defeat.

She ate supper that night as usual with Miss Arlundsen and Jaggard in the gallery outside the *bala-khanah*. They talked about the chances of getting into Tabriz by noon of the next day, just as a ship's passengers speculate on the hour of landing. Very soon after the finish of the meal, Miss Arlundsen said she was tired and went away along the gallery to her sleeping place at

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the other side of the *serai* gate. Jaggard lingered a few minutes in the doorway of the *bala-khanah* while Hassan spread Judith's roll of blankets and rugs, then he, too, said good-night and turned toward the stairs.

"You'd better get your beauty winks," he called back to Judith. "They'll dig out of here earlier than usual to-morrow."

"I'm going to turn in now," she replied.

Jaggard sat for an hour on the masonry steps leading to the cloisters. The moonlight played fantastic tricks with the kneeling camels, and silvered the muffled sleepers that lay about their fires in the *manzil* court. A caravan dog in search of food sniffed at his boots; Jaggard hissed at him "*Tsst!*" and the animal slunk away like a lean shadow. Over near the gate he could hear the guttural undertones of two camelmen in conversation. And presently he saw the tall figure of Miss Arlundsen leisurely moving along the upper gallery.

When she turned the corner she stepped into the shadow of the tower, and the velvet blackness swallowed her up. He was thinking that she must have gone into her own room, when just over the gateway to the court-yard the red tip of a cigarette glowed, moved up and down for a moment and then shot down to the ground like a falling star. At once a dim shape moved out from the shadow of the gateway below and picked up the still glowing cigarette.

"Thrifty beggar," Jaggard thought, "and extravagant Lina!"

He had a jest on the tip of his tongue ready to call up to her, when a sudden hubbub of tongues and stamping of feet broke out beyond the *serai* gate.

"*Ahil* he is loose!" cried a hoarse voice, and Jaggard could hear the rush of a camel as it plunged through the night. He hurried down the steps, sprawling over a man in blankets on the ground, who awoke and swore in his beard: "A curse on all unbelievers!"

A dozen camel-men were talking excitedly at the entrance to the inner courtyard when Jaggard reached the gateway.

"What's the row?" he asked.

"Gone!" grunted one of the cameleers.

"The swiftest of the Bactrians!" growled another.

"*Ahil*" said a third, shrugging his shoulders, "a weak knee-halter—it is the will of Allah, my brothers. Let us sleep."

They returned to their blankets, but Jaggard relighted his pipe and stood for a few minutes at the gate. Far away in the darkness he could hear the padding feet of the escaped camel and the shouts and lamentations of the pursuing owner. Then the sounds waned fainter and fainter until they ceased entirely.

"It's an all-night chase for that fellow, whoever he is," he said, yawning and stretching his arms. "Well, it's none of my funeral!" He made his way back to the cloisters, rolled himself in his blankets and went to sleep with the facility of a native.

CHAPTER XV

IN THE BALA-KHANAH

IN THE dim light of the next dawn he was kneeling over a smoky dung-fire, swearing softly at the obstinacy of inanimate things in general and his kettle in particular, when he felt a light touch on his shoulder. Looking up, he forgot the greasy smoke and the kettle that would not boil, for Judy was standing beside him, her face as white as wood ashes and a tragic expression in her eyes.

"Tommy, my boy, what did I tell you?" he said to himself. "Didn't I say she'd need you some day?" Then aloud: "What's the matter, Mrs. Savidge? Seen a ghost?"

His attempted jocularity could not conceal the concern in his voice. She looked at him with a long scrutiny, as if asking herself whether she should take him into her confidence. His blue eyes, usually so droll, were grave as he returned her glance.

"What is it, Memsahib?" he said quietly. "You can trust me. You're from Home, you know!"

"I'm in great trouble," she answered. "I need your help, but—but I can't tell you."

Jaggard nodded.

"I understand. Orders—quite right."

Judith moved nearer and lowered her voice.

"He told me to trust no one but Hassan. But, of course, he didn't dream there would be you."

"Your husband knows the East—no one better. He knows that you can't trust any one—sometimes not even yourself, down here."

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"I trust you," said Judith simply. "You must help me. Hassan is brave and faithful, but I need advice from some one of my own kind. I feel so strange and alone here among these people."

She looked with unhappy eyes, as she spoke, at the familiar morning scene—the bearded men in outlandish costumes, lashing huge bales to grunting camels, haranguing, gesticulating, reviling one another's birth and ancestry. All the life and color had gone out of the daily drama. Judy was realizing the truth that comes sooner or later to every traveler—that mood is a larger factor than atmosphere in accounting for one's most satisfactory experiences.

"If somebody's wrung your wad—I mean if it's money you need," said Jaggard, "don't let that worry you. That's one of the advantages of traveling with a real 'wiz'. When we want money all we have to do is to reach for it—see?"

The Great Jaggard reached into the air and a silver coin twinkled at his finger-tips. In his heart he knew that something more serious than the loss of money had happened to Judy; but, being a man, he could think of no better way to offer his assistance.

She wrung her hands.

"I wish it were only money!" Then she added, lowering her voice. "I have lost some papers—his papers! Don't you understand?"

Jaggard nodded his head.

"They are valuable; I can't begin to tell you how valuable they are——"

"Of course! Men like John Savidge aren't made for little things. Well, have you any idea where you lost them?"

"Lost them?" Judy's eyes opened wide. "I didn't mean it that way. They—they've been stolen!"

Jaggard puckered up his mouth as if he were going to whistle, but no sound came forth.

"That's a horse of another color. Are you sure?"

"Absolutely. There is no way I could have lost them. I had the papers when I undressed for bed last night."

"You've searched the *bala-khanah?*"

"Every inch of it. They're not there."

Jaggard rubbed his finger over his chin—a characteristic gesture when he was thinking hard. "Who was in the *bala-khanah* last night?"

"Why, there was Hassan, but, of course, you don't suspect him! He couldn't ——"

"I don't suspect any one—yet. But we may get some clue by the process of elimination. Who else?"

Judith flushed and looked embarrassed. Jaggard smiled.

"I was among those also present," he prompted.

"But it's too absurd even to think of you in that way!"

"But you must," said Jaggard solemnly. "In this game you must suspect every one until he qualifies for a coat of whitewash. Was there any one else?"

"No, that's all," she returned. "After you went away, Hassan went down to look after the horses and I went to bed; no, I didn't! I remember, now! There *was* some one else in the *bala-khanah* last night!"

"After Hassan had gone?"

"Yes—Miss Arlundsen."

Jaggard's eyes narrowed; the wrinkles gathered round them and his mouth hardened.

"Surely," Judith cried, "you don't suspect Miss Arlundsen!"

"My dear lady, I'm only trying to get at the facts. What was Miss Arlundsen doing in the *bala-khanah* last night?"

"She wanted to borrow my peroxide. One of her corset-steels broke when she was dismounting and made a jagged cut in her left side. She knew I carried peroxide in my medicine-case. Oh, really, it was a bad cut! I washed it with the peroxide and put on a bandage with adhesive plaster."

A curious look compounded of impishness and pity came into Jaggard's face.

"The case is getting interesting. Our old friend Sherlock Holmes would eat it up—eh? 'The Broken Corset-steel, or the Mystery of the *Bala-khanah!*' Corking title—what?"

"Please don't jest! It's too serious!" Judy's lips trembled.

"Don't mind me; it's only my way. I'd joke if I were going to be married to-morrow. It sort of helps me to think straight. And, by Allah! we've got to think straight if we get back those papers."

THE samovar began to steam. Jaggard suggested that she make the tea while he got ready the eggs.

"We don't want to look like conspirators," he said.

While she busied herself over the sam-

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ovar, Judith described the missing packet. The papers had been folded small, wrapped in waterproof silk and strung around her neck with a ribbon. She had been in the habit of wearing them thus night and day. When Miss Arlundsen came in, she had been ready for bed, and she had slipped on her traveling cloak before she found the peroxide. The papers were as usual in the packet, suspended from the ribbon under her night-robe.

"When you bandaged the wound, you had to bend over?" Jaggard asked her.

"Of course," she replied.

"Could she have seen the packet?"

"I'm not sure, but she could see the ribbon around my neck, as she must have done before."

"That would be enough for a lady of her ability," muttered Jaggard. "Well, what happened after you bandaged the wound?"

"She was telling me about the wonderful bazaars at Tabriz, and I was so interested we stood talking in the doorway for ten minutes or more. Then she said good-night and went down the gallery toward her room. When I got back to the *bala-khanah* the lamp had flickered out. There was no more oil in the dish. I threw off my cloak in the dark and got into my blankets as best I could."

"You had the papers when you went to bed?"

Her face flushed and she looked at him with distressed eyes.

"I—I'm not sure. I'm afraid I forgot all about the papers. It was dark, you understand, and I was very sleepy and tired. I remember hearing some shouting in the *serai*, but I was too sleepy to pay much attention to it. The last thing I remember was Hassan saying '*Khuda hafiz*' to Miss Arlundsen. I didn't know anything more until he called me at daybreak. It seems to me that the instant I woke up I thought of the packet. It was gone—snipped off the ribbon!"

"Have you any idea how it was taken?"

"Some one must have entered the *bala-khanah* during the night. But yet, that doesn't seem possible, with Hassan on guard. What do you think?"

"Personally," said Jaggard, "I'd rather take a chance of breaking into the Shah's seraglio than try to sneak by Hassan in the night."

"On the other hand, it isn't possible that the papers could have been taken from me while I was awake." She sat down wearily and held her cold hands out to the blaze of the fire. "My head whirls with thinking about it! I can't understand it in the least."

"I can," said Jaggard grimly; "and it's dollars to doughnuts Lina Arlundsen can, too!"

Judy looked up at him with startled eyes.

"But that's absurd! In the first place, she couldn't have taken the papers without my knowledge; and in the second place, they would do her no good. They're written in cipher and only three persons in the world know the key."

JAGGARD rubbed his chin with a long forefinger. A film came over his eyes as if he had detached his mind from his surroundings and sent it searching among his memories. In a moment he dropped on one knee and began working over the fire.

"I don't want to butt into your private affairs," he said, lowering his voice; "but there is one thing I'd like to know: Was there anything in that packet that would be useful to the Russian Secret Service?"

Judith turned white to the lips. He had only to look at her once to see that he had probed to the heart of her fear. His eyes began to snap and sparkle; but he lifted an egg from the fire as if wholly absorbed in the act.

"Now, listen," he went on. "There's a woman in the Russian service—a wonderfully slick one. I've never seen her, to my knowledge, but I've heard a great deal about her in the East. She's the ablest operator on the staff of Wolkonsky." He paused after the name and looked up quickly at Judy. "You've heard of him?"

Judy moistened her pale lips and nodded.

"I've heard of him," she said faintly. "But how do you connect Lina Arlundsen with this woman you speak of, and with—with Wolkonsky? You're just guessing, aren't you?"

Jaggard sat back on his heels and smiled at her his broad, quizzical, bland smile.

"Guessing is my business, dear lady! Now, this woman I speak of is said to be only half Russian; the rest of her is Scandinavian. Do you begin to see how I connect up? There's no use beating about the bush, Mrs. Savidge. I've known of your husband

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and of his business for the last five years, and I know that the Secret Service is on his track. It's an easy guess that your papers are on their way to St. Petersburg now, by way of Teheran, most likely!"

Judy stared at him with a blanched face. Her eyes were enormous, and her hands wrung themselves together.

"Oh, I can't believe it! And even if she took them she couldn't read them—she couldn't read our cipher in a thousand years!"

"If she's the woman I think she is, she'll read it. She's a cipher expert. They say she's never been stuck—and those nihilists give her a heap of practise."

Judith knit her brows and thought desperately.

"But it's absurd to say that even a clever woman could take that packet under my very eyes!"

"Perhaps so," drawled Jaggard. "And I don't suppose any one could take that watch from your belt without your knowing it?"

Judy's hand flew to the small gun-metal watch at her belt.

"Of course not—not if I'm awake!"

Jaggard changed the subject.

"If no one can read those papers, why does it matter if they're gone?"

JUDITH hesitated for a moment. She felt as if the very ground under her feet were uncertain; but she was desperately in need of help, and in appealing to Jaggard she was obeying an intuition that was stronger than reason.

"Those papers," she said, at last, "are a key to the location of some valuable plans. They represent something my husband has fought for and lived for, and he trusted them to me! That is what hurts, now that I have lost them. I don't believe the Russian Secret Service can make use of the papers if they do fall into their hands, on account of the cipher; but that isn't the point. If anything should—should happen to my husband, I am to get the plans myself, and without the key I'm not sure—not absolutely sure—I can find them."

"Oh, Lina!" said Jaggard with a chuckle of grim delight, "I'm on to your graft now. I sabe your little game! Have another cup of tea?"

Judy mechanically held out her cup, and Jaggard poured the tea from the samovar. In passing it back to her he spilled a little on her skirt, apologized for his awkwardness and with his handkerchief wiped away the few drops of tea.

"Never mind the tea. What would you advise me to do?" Judy asked him. "I must get those papers back whatever happens. Have you any suggestions?"

He looked across the courtyard thoughtfully and up at the gallery in front of the *bala-khanah*.

"Here comes Hassan. Now, this is my advice. Finish your breakfast as if nothing had happened, and I'll go up and have a little casual conversation with the daughter of the Vikings."

Judy rose to follow him.

"Then I'll go with you," she said.

Jaggard put out a detaining arm.

"I think you'd better let me see her alone. If I'm to help you I've got to play the game my own way—see? You wait for me here. The caravan will start in half an hour, but I think before then we'll have a clue."

He started across the courtyard, but halfway to the stairs he turned suddenly and came back to her. His face wore its broadest smile.

"I forgot to give you this!" He held out his hand. Lying in its palm was Judy's little watch.

"How—how did you do it?" she gasped.

"Sleight of hand—when I spilled the tea!"

He grinned down at her nonplussed face.

"It's my trade," he explained. "And if Lina Arlundsen's the woman I think she is, she can give me cards and spades and beat me out, with both hands tied!"

CHAPTER XVI

GREEK MEETS GREEK

AS JAGGARD strode across the *serai*, the first rays of the rising sun splashed red on the *manzil* walls. A tom-tom sounded in the tower and a shrill voice cried:

"*Allah il Allah*—there is no God but God!"

The faithful in the courtyard prostrated themselves in the dust, their faces toward Mecca; and from their swarthy throats came the thundering response:

"There is no God but God!"

Jaggard made his way up the dark flight

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of stairs and along the corridor toward the *bala-khanah*. And as he walked, he reconstructed the theft of Judith's papers. No one knew better than he what a simple matter it must have been for a person with trained fingers. A half-turn of the body, a slight jostle of the victim at the critical moment—and the trick was done. The only tool needed was a tiny pair of scissors concealed in the hand. To snip the ribbon and "palm" away the packet offered no insurmountable difficulties to one possessed of the requisite nerve and dexterity.

He found Miss Arlundsen in the gallery above the *serai* gate. She was sitting cross-legged on the floor like a native, her back against the parapet, placidly engaged in a game of solitaire.

"Good morning, M'sieu Jaggard," she said pleasantly, returning his greeting as he paused in front of her. She rolled the "r" and accented the last syllable as a Frenchwoman would have done. "One has to pass the time in some way—is it not so?" She pointed to the cards on the floor.

Jaggard pulled out his pipe, filled the bowl with yellow Persian tobacco, tamping it down with a slim forefinger. Then with equal deliberation he lit up and exhaled a cloud of blue smoke into the frosty morning air.

"Don't you find it rather tame?" he asked at length with a dry chuckle.

"What do you mean?" Her voice was mildly indifferent. Jaggard looked at her admiringly: at the trig, spick figure in riding-skirt and jacket of brown tweed, at the helmet resting on the coiled ropes of yellow hair, at the creamy freshness of her cheeks and the perfect oval of her chin. The eyes she lifted inquiringly to Jaggard's were as coldly blue as a Wintry sky. "I'd give a good deal if I could hear what's going on under that helmet," he said to himself. Then aloud: "I should think you'd find poker more in your line."

"I do not understand," said Miss Arlundsen.

"No, of course not. I'll elucidate. Listen!" He pointed to the cards. "That's a dinky game—get that? A kindergarten recreation compared with what you usually play. Sabe?"

"A kindergarten game?" she spoke slowly in her beautiful, precise English. "Is it what you Americans call a—joke?" She turned a card. "You are so droll, you Americans!"

"We're a nation of cut-ups, Lina!" He grinned audaciously as he used her name. Her eyelids fluttered, but she did not look up. "We're the real goods when it comes to doping out the dido stuff! But this is no joke. I'm in dead earnest. I've white-chipped my way into this game and I intend to draw cards—sabe?"

Miss Arlundsen did not seem to hear. Chin in hand she studied the cards.

"Two kings in the top row," she murmured. "M'sieu Jaggard, I'll wager you a hundred *kran* I make the game."

JAGGARD sucked thoughtfully at his pipe, and the wrinkles gathered around his eyes. Here was a woman after his own heart, shrewd, cool, adroit; and it was with an unaccustomed thrill he realized that he would have need of all his resources if he was tó play the game with her. It was one of the great moments in the life of the Great Jaggard. But his placid face gave no hint of the pleasurable emotions that glowed in his soul.

"The odds are against you," he said aloud. What he said to himself was: "Careful, Tommy, or here's where the lady gets a mortgage on your goat."

Miss Arlundsen shrugged her shoulders.

"Are you afraid to take the bank?"

There was a note of mockery in her voice that flicked him like the lash of a skilfully handled whip. Under the purring softness of her voice—a note quite different from the cold incisiveness of her usual tone—it seemed to him that he detected a challenge to play a bigger game than the cards stood for. Every drop of gambling blood in his body stirred. There never had been a game that Tom Jaggard would not play, never a hazard so preposterous that he would not take the small end of the bet.

"Make it something worth while," he returned genially. "Say two hundred *kran*, and I'll take the bank."

"As you please!" She turned down a card. "Ah! another king, and a space in the top row. They seem to be—how do you say it?—coming my way. Is it not so?"

"They do for a fact!" he said slowly. "Everything's coming your way. You sure are a wonder! I'll take off my hat to you any day in the week!"

She lifted her eyebrows.

"What for? I don't understand."

"That's French for I'm stuck on your

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work. There's nothing coarse about it, Lina! It's megalorious—all to the gold, and eighteen karats fine. I've been doing the hanky-panky stunt for twenty years, but you've got me trimmed forty ways to Sunday. The undersigned is a piker compared with you!"

"Again, I don't understand!"

"You don't sabe, eh? Well, then, my dear, I'll spiel it to you in words of one syllable. I'm a committee of one appointed to request you to please keep off the grass. The game's up, Lina—hand over those papers!"

Miss Arlundsen did not answer. She appeared to be engrossed in the cards on the floor.

"Well?" There was a hard note of impatience in his voice.

"Papers?" she asked, wrinkling her forehead as if in perplexity. "What papers?"

"The papers you took from Judith Savidge in the *bala-khanah* last night. I want 'em, understand? I want 'em before we leave the caravanserai!" There was nothing genial about the Great Jaggard now.

Miss Arlundsen looked at him and her gaze was one of utter incomprehensibility.

"Judith," she murmured. "Judith is a very pretty name; one does not hear it often."

"I want those papers, now!"

"You are so amusing, M'sieu Jaggard!" she retorted smilingly.

"I'll be a scream before I'm through," he said grimly. He took a step forward and stood squarely in front of her. "What's the use of palavering? We're only wasting time. You understand, all right, so pony up, produce!" Then his manner changed and the wrinkles of humor gathered under his eyes. "Come," he said; "be a good girl, and we'll play—solitaire, casino—any old game you like!"

The woman turned up a card indifferently.

"Ah! the fourth king, M'sieu Jaggard. Another hundred *kran* that I make the game?"

Looking down at her, the genial patience of Jaggard seemed suddenly to give way. He lowered his sandy head. His face became threatening and ugly.

"—— the game!" he snapped. "I want those papers! I'm no tenderfoot; you can't play me for a sucker! You've got 'em, and I'll have them if I have to strip every rag off your back!"

Lina Arlundsen leaped to her feet.

"You swine!" she snarled. "You even touch me and I'll kill you!"

THE veneer of her cool poise seemed to crack; and the soul of her, vindictive, enraged, and quite fearless, blazed through. There flowered a vivid crimson spot on each cheek. As they stood confronting each other, there floated up to them the droning intonation of the faithful:

"There is no God but God, and Mohammed is the slave of God!"

The man was the first to recover himself.

"That's all right, my dear!" he said mildly. "All you have to do is to hand over those papers. I'm next to your little game, you see."

The vivid spots faded slowly from her cheeks, and an insolent gleam came into her eyes.

"What is *your* little game, m'sieu?" she inquired.

Jaggard resumed his habitual attitude—thumbs in pockets, head thrust forward, legs wide apart.

"Don't make such rude insinuations, my dear," he said pleasantly. "They hurt my feelings and get on my nerves. Come, let's chuck this rapid-fire act. You know my game's on the square. I'm not connected with the Russian Secret Service! Don't suppose you ever heard of the Service, eh? Or of Serge Wolkonsky, either?"

A subtle and almost imperceptible hardening of her face was the only sign she showed that this random shot had gone home. There was anger and defiance in her eyes, but no fear. It flashed into Jaggard's mind that even in her outburst of anger there had not been a hint of the fear a person would show that carried something another was threatening to take by force. There had not been a single betraying gesture or glance.

The fierce blaze of anger she showed had in it only the element of personal repulsion. He was forced to one conclusion: she showed no fear because she had nothing to be afraid of—the papers were not in her possession. If it had not been for that subtle change in her expression when he mentioned the Service and Wolkonsky, he would begin to feel uncertain of his ground. As it was, he

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merely felt puzzled, piqued, unprepared.

"Talk is cheap, M'sieu Jaggard," she sneered.

From the pocket of her jacket she took a tiny silver cigarette-case, lighted a cigarette, and tossed the match down into the courtyard.

The glowing tip of her cigarette reminded him of something; for an instant his mind went groping for the elusive suggestion. Then suddenly, as if the spark from the cigarette had lighted up a series of pictures before his mind's eye, he saw again a red spark shooting downward like a falling star, saw a dim figure creep out from the shadow of the *serai* gate, pick up the glowing butt of a cigarette and melt again into the shadow! And he heard again the thud of a camel running away into the night.

"Oh, good work!" he cried aloud. "Good work, my dear! I don't suppose you know anything about the camel that broke its halter and ran away last night?"

It was a bit of sheer guessing, but her face turned white, the creamy white of ivory, although her eyes did not waver.

"How should I know?" she retorted disdainfully. "What have I to do with the camels?"

"Nothing, of course! How should you know that the swiftest of the Bactrians was stampeded at the *serai* gate last night? How should you know that its driver waited in the shadow of the tower for a signal—the dropping of a lighted cigarette? How should you know that a woman, leaning over the parapet above, gave the signal and dropped a packet at his feet? And I don't suppose you have a suspicion that the packet is now in a saddle-bag of that camel on the way to—Wolkonsky—eh?"

She stared at him with a malicious gleam in her blue eyes.

"You are so clever, m'sieu," she said; "it is a pity you are going to lose this game."

She sat down again and turned up a card or two, with her tapering, skilful fingers. Jaggard looked down at her with the light of honest admiration in his eyes.

"Say, Lina!" he remarked candidly, "you and I could clean up all the fall guys between Port Said and 'Frisco! What a team we'd make! We'd trim 'em all—the captains of high finance would be as easy as the rubes!"

Miss Arlundsen pointed to the four packets of cards face upward on the floor. On the top of each packet was a king.

"I win, M'sieu Jaggard," she said mockingly.

"Win? Of course you win," he drawled. "You win everything in sight, hands down." He tossed the money into her lap. "But one of these days, my dear, there may be another deal—and then it'll be my turn to shuffle the cards!"

CHAPTER XVII

THE CARAVAN PROCEEDS

AS HE walked back across the *manzil* court there was a stirring outside the *serai* gate that betokened the starting of the caravan. Jaggard hastily, but none the less picturesquely, sketched for Judy his interview with Miss Arlundsen.

"Remember that old buccaneer with the black beard and yellow girdle that stuck to you like a poor relation that night at Akstafa?" he asked her. "Well, I figure out he's the one that did the job. Probably was ordered to shadow you till our friend Lina arrived on the scene. You remember she came in from Tiflis on the next train after you?"

Judith's face became haggard.

"I wish I could be sure," she sighed.

"It's the surest thing you know! By this time that yellow-girdled Arab is fifty miles away and skyhooting for Teheran, or wherever your friend Wolkonsky holds forth. I'll tell you what, we'll hang around the gate when the caravan starts, and if his whiskers isn't in the procession, it's a dead cinch he's got the goods!"

For an instant Judith's composure gave way and she dropped her face in her hands. Jaggard patted her shoulder awkwardly.

"The game's never lost till the last card's played, my dear!" he said. "Look here, I'm for you, you know, and that's something, if I do say it! We'll beat out little Lina yet. What are your plans—if you don't mind telling me—after you get to Tabriz?"

Judith looked up with a feverish color in her cheeks.

"There's a man I'm to see in Tabriz. He may possibly have some message for me from my husband. If there's no word for me I really don't know what I shall do."

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"Is this man some one you can depend on?"

"His name is Gholam Rezah. Do you know him?"

"Know of him," Jaggard said. "He's a pretty big man in Persia—got all kinds of dough. He used to publish a paper in Teheran, until he joined the revolutionary party. Then the paper was suppressed and Gholam vanished from the capital. He's at the head of a big secret society that's working to establish a liberal government and save the country from the clutches of Russia—sort of Young Persian party, you see. He's done all he can to keep Russia from getting railroad concessions, and I reckon he and your husband know each other pretty well."

Judy nodded absently. Then she stood up and her face flushed. Miss Arlundsen was coming toward them across the courtyard with her free, swinging stride. Her expression was, as usual, coldly serene.

"Don't let her think she's got you worried," Jaggard admonished in an undertone. "Just trail along till it comes time to draw cards—then stand pat."

Miss Arlundsen's good-morning was as cool and crisp as usual. She was as unaffectedly cordial as she had been at any time during the journey. She smiled and nodded to Jaggard and then turned to Judy.

"M'sieu Jaggard has told me of your misfortune," she said. "I am very sorry."

"Really, it's nothing of great importance," Judy answered coldly. "The papers I lost will be of no value whatsoever to the finder."

Her chin was up and her eyes unflinchingly met Miss Arlundsen's scrutiny.

"She's playing the game!" Jaggard thought.

"No? I am glad," replied Miss Arlundsen. "I must have misunderstood M'sieu Jaggard. One can not always tell what m'sieu means from his language—is it not so? I, too, have lost many things on these journeys—money, jewels, valuables. They are all thieves."

She inclined her head toward the camelmen bustling about in their preparations for departure.

"Especially black-bearded pirates with yellow girdles," Jaggard staccatoed.

Miss Arlundsen smiled with ever so slight a lift of her fine eyebrows.

"I dare say one is as bad as another," she returned indifferently.

Then she turned away and walked deliberately across the courtyard. Jaggard looked after her strong, graceful figure and whistled reflectively between his teeth.

"And yet they won't let 'em vote!" he ruminated, screwing up his face until it resembled a gargoyle.

JUDITH stood with him in the shadow of the tower while the grumbling camels shambled through the *serai* gate. The black-bearded cameleer with the yellow girdle, who piloted the fleet-footed Bactrian dromedary, was not in the cavalcade, and Judy was compelled to admit that circumstantial evidence favored Jaggard's theory. It was with a heavy heart she mounted her shaggy pony and followed in the wake of the caravan on the last stage of the journey to Tabriz.

It was the beginning of April, and almost in a night a magical change had been wrought over the land. All the way down from Akstafa the caravan had crawled across desolate plains, pinched and shrewish and old. But this morning as she rode out of the *serai* gate, Judy could scarcely believe her eyes. In the night, rain had fallen. Where the day before had been stony wastes and saffron-colored plains, to-day was the green plenitude of Spring, gently waving grass and nodding wild flowers. The air was heavy with the odor of growing herbage, and more than once the caravan sheered from the beaten path to graze across the plain.

But April is April the world over—coy, uncertain, trembling between laughter and tears. The morning was insincerely bright, flashing and glittering with those siren smiles that lure to ambuscades of rain. The caravan had not covered half of the two remaining *farsakhs* of the journey before the rain came down, at first in iridescent showers—the sun smiling through the scudding drops—then in a cold gray mizzle. The sky sagged low, and Judy strained her eyes in vain for a glimpse of the domes and minarets of world-old Tabriz.

The caravan sloshed through the yellow mud, the men with blankets shrouding their faces, the women with the curtains of the *kajavehs* drawn taut against the storm. Hour after hour they plodded along sluggishly. Then about noon a tremor of excitement rippled through the cavalcade. There were guttural shouts of "*Ahel Ahil*"

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and, breasting a low hill no bigger than an ocean roller, wall-ringed Tabriz stretched before them with its monotonous expanse of flat-roofed, single-storied houses, broken up by the domed arches of the bazaars, the minarets of the mosques and the shouldering wall of the ancient citadel.

As the caravan entered the city the sun smote through the leaden sky and slanted on the Masjid-i-Kabud—the famous blue mosque of Mohammedan history. It flushed the dome and arches encrusted with blue tile bordered with a faience of yellow, white and black, until, seen through the mist, the crumbling walls appeared to take on a hundred unreal shapes.

Judy held her breath. Though she was soaked to the skin and bedraggled generally, the momentary glimpse of the witchery wrought by sun and mist was worth all the discomforts of the journey. Then the sun disappeared, the rain fell gray and sheer, and the caravan wound its way through the narrow labyrinthine streets to the bazaars.

CHAPTER XVIII

GHOLAM REZAH MAKES SOME PLANS

RAIN at home is restful, but away from home it is the dreariest thing imaginable. Judy ensconced in the *bala-khanah* of the huge caravanserai attached to the bazaars, was miserable in mind and body and disposed to rebel against the ancient law that imposes upon the stranger within the gates an obligation to conform to the customs and usages of the citizenry. As soon as she had donned dry clothing she would have set out at once for the house of the Aga Gholam Rezah, but Jaggard wagged his head against the plan.

"You're not in Gallipolis or Keokuk," he explained. "Over here people don't gossip over the backyard fence or run in any old time for a visit. Rezah's one of the leading citizens; according to local etiquette you've got to give him at least two hours' notice."

So Hassan was despatched to the house of Rezah, and returned with the information that Savidge Memsahib would be received at two hours before sunset.

Depending on Hassan's sense of Oriental chronology they set out from the caravanserai—Judy had begged Jaggard to see her as far as the door—with Hassan leading and Jaggard bringing up the rear. They threaded their way through the narrow, tortuous streets that reeked with filth, until they came to a stop at last before a narrow, unpainted door studded with brass nails and ornamented with an exquisite knocker of figured iron.

The exterior of the house was merely a wall of mud plaster without so much as a window; and Judy was unprepared for the surprise that awaited her when the attendant escorted her through a dark passage that led into a spacious court laid out with trees and shrubbery and flowers and paved with the wonderful opalescent reflet tiles that are the glory of Persian artisans. A fountain plashed musically in a tiled basin; goldfish darted to and fro in the crystal pool. On each side of the court were doors before which hung superb portières. The air was heavy with the scent of musk and jasmine.

With a low salaam the attendant left her, and Judy, standing beside the crystal pool, had an embarrassed sense of being watched by some one she could not see. She took an uncertain step forward, past a flowering shrub, and then she saw that a stairway climbed upward from the end of the court beyond the pool, and a man stood, evidently waiting for her, at its foot.

This was plainly Gholam Rezah. He was a short, bulky man, shaggy as a buffalo, with a broad swarthy face, a grizzled beard and mustache, and a nose shaped like a carrot. He stood in his stockinged feet to receive her, and he wore a lambskin cap—thus fulfilling Persian ideas of good form. He bowed gravely as Judy advanced.

"Peace be unto you!" he said in the vernacular.

And then in fluent, if rather guttural, English he inquired after her health and the health of Savidge Sahib. As he talked he conducted her to a divan covered with a tiger-skin. From somewhere behind one of the portières came a subdued silken rustle. Judy made a shrewd guess that the eternal feminine stood behind one of those magnificent door-coverings. Her imagination thrilled to the beauty and mystery of this surprising house, in spite of her perplexities—and, also, in spite of the carrot nose of Gholam Rezah!

THE pool, the flowering trees, the swinging priceless tapestries became more than ever like some setting from the "Thousand and One Nights" when

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two attendants entered noiselessly, leaving their sandals at the door, to place in front of her on a low table a tray of jellied eggs, rose-leaf preserves, sweetmeats and tea. Courtesy compelled her to eat and to reply to the polite nothings of her host; but before the last servant had backed out, taking with him the tea things, she asked Gholam Rezah the question that had been burning on her lips since she entered.

"Is there anything for me—any letter or message?"

Her host shook his head.

"There is none, Memsahib. I myself have had no word from the Sahib since a certain letter he wrote me a few days before he was to leave Tiflis."

"You knew of his arrest?"

"A few days ago I learned of it from one of my men stationed at Tiflis. Anything I can do to aid you or the Sahib, I will do. Is it your intention to go on to——"

He made a polite pause.

"To Ispahan," Judy supplied.

In spite of her efforts, her voice trembled a little. She had made so certain there would be a letter or telegram for her from Savidge that she felt a sickening sense of disappointment now that she learned there was not so much as a word from him. Gholam Rezah bent upon her his grizzled, shaggy brows that moved up and down as he talked with an astonishing facility.

"You must not be concerned because there is no message from your husband, Memsahib. I hear that he is still held for trial, and under the circumstances it would be useless, if not unwise, to try to communicate with you. Every telegram or letter he sent out would be read by the authorities, and a code or cipher message would be confiscated."

"How long do you think they can detain him in Tiflis?" she asked.

Rezah's great eyebrows went up ironically.

"As long as is necessary for their purpose, madame, unless he forces them to set him free. Your husband is a very accomplished person, madame! But the charge against him is conspiracy against an official—a serious offense, on Russian territory."

"Then," said Judy slowly, "then I shall have to go on alone."

He looked at her questioningly, and she told him about the theft of the packet. His deep-set eyes gleamed and his eyebrows worked alarmingly as he listened. His manner changed. He was no longer the Oriental, suavely offering her tea and polite conversation, but a politician of craft and cunning, who summons a shrewd mind to weigh every chance and trick of his enemy.

"Wolkonsky is probably in Teheran." He ran over the points against their side. "The papers stolen from you are on their way to him now, without doubt."

"But there is only a map and a few words of direction in cipher. Surely he can make nothing of that?" she interrupted.

For the least fraction of a second there shone in the eyes of Gholam Rezah a gleam of Oriental contempt for the feminine mind. But his voice was patiently polite as he assured her that no cipher would prove a serious obstacle to the Russian Secret Service.

"Cipher-writing was invented in Russia," he chuckled. "Then what happens? By the aid of your map and your cipher, Wolkonsky will go to this spot, or will send one of his staff; he will find your husband's valuable plans; he will return to Teheran, where he will put himself into communication with St. Petersburg. After that"—he gave an expressive shrug—"Savidge Sahib will find he has done his work for Russia!"

JUDY sat still for a moment looking down at her clasped hands. Something that was not at all like the despair and fear she had known since the packet was stolen stirred in her fiercely. She sent a keen glance at the brooding face of Gholam Rezah.

"Could one traveling as fast as possible get to, say, Pasagardae before a person could reach the same point from Teheran?" she asked.

His eyes gleamed at her under their grizzled thatch.

"You mean?"

"I mean that I am going to get to the place where those plans are hidden first. If I can beat Wolkonsky there I believe I can find them, map or no map. And I'm going to try. Will you help me, Mr. Rezah?"

The shrewd eyes of Aga Gholam Rezah expressed something that was almost admiration. He sat for a long time stroking his beard and thinking. Then:

"It can be done. A forced journey straight to Ispahan, then south about thirty-seven *farsakhs*—if it be the will of Allah!"

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He clapped his hands sharply and a servant came to whom he gave an order.

"I have sent for one that will arrange the matter of post-horses. It is necessary to lose no time. To-morrow at the sixth hour after sunrise Nusr-ed-Deen Shah will present himself to you at the caravanserai. By that time all details of the journey will have been attended to.

"In Ispahan there is one—" he paused a brief moment to write a name and address on a tablet that he took from his broad girdle—"there is one that will meet you when you arrive. He will aid you, under instructions from me. Now it is necessary to know what escort you have with you, madame."

Judy's mind flew to Jaggard.

"I have Abdallah ibh Hassan"—Rezah nodded as if satisfied—"and an American that I can depend on; he will go with us as far as Ispahan."

"That is enough," he decided. "The roads are safe; a small party travels fast and light. At Ispahan my men will reinforce your guard, unless it falls out that Savidge Sahib meets you there."

Judy looked up quickly.

"Do you think that a possibility?"

Rezah gave a grim nod.

"We have a proverb, Memsahib: 'The jackal that lives in the wilds of Mazanderan can only be caught by the hounds of Mazanderan.' Gholam Rezah is going to enter the chase, madame, and we shall see!"

He tugged at his beard, his half hidden eyes gleaming under their overhanging brows. Judith sat still, scarcely daring to breathe.

"You tell me he was arrested at the instance of the Khadkhuda of Tiflis?" he asked her, after a moment's thought.

"Yes," she nodded.

A glitter of triumph came into the eyes of Gholam Rezah. For the first time during their interview he showed the points of his yellow teeth in a smile that turned his broad face into the face of a satyr.

"I recall a small affair of the Khadkhuda of Tiflis," he muttered in his beard. "It is convenient to have a good memory. I think, madame, your husband will not be detained much longer! I will send an attendant back to the caravanserai with you."

He clapped his hands again. A servant came with lights—two great bowls like amber moons; and another followed with a Chinese lantern in each hand. It had darkened while they talked, and now the courtyard and the pool were full of shadows and soft rustlings.

From behind one of the portières came the distant tinkle of some zither-like instrument. Rezah walked with Judith across the courtyard. Ahead of them the lanterns floated down the darkness of the corridor, casting a dim glow.

"You will know my men"—Gholam Rezah lowered his voice—"by the proverb of the jackal of Mazanderan. You will remember it, madame?"

"I will remember it," she said. "Thank you, and, *Khuda hafiz!*"

HASSAN rose up from the stone floor of the anteroom, and Jaggard, the faithful, joined her outside. The two great white-muslin lanterns bobbed ahead of them down the inky streets. For the first time since she came out to seek adventure, Judith felt something of the thrill that runs like quicksilver through the veins of the true soldier of fortune when he hears the call of a lost cause. She felt strung to a pitch of exhilaration that made her almost gay. Jaggard looked down at her in considerable surprise when she spoke, her voice had in it such a ring of excitement.

"Mr. Jaggard, you like a gambling chance, don't you?" she asked. "Do you want to take one with me? I'm going to Ispahan and then south, a long way south, unless I get other orders. In plain American, I'm going to beat Mr. Serge Wolkonsky to it! Do you want to take a hand in the game?"

A long, slow, seraphic grin split the face of Tom Jaggard into two parts.

"Do I want to take a hand? Do I? My dear, you couldn't keep me out of the game now, not with an ax! Say, I'm for you, understand that? I'd walk from here to Ispahan to beat that Lina lady; but it ain't that altogether—no, not altogether. You—well, you're from Home, you see. Just put me wise to the game and I'll chip in and draw cards."

His voice became suddenly hard as he answered her.

"It's our edge now, Memsahib; but I reckon when it comes our turn to deal, they won't shift the cut on us or ring in a cold deck again—not if I know it!"

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CHAPTER XIX

ON THE ROAD TO ISPAHAN

IT IS five hundred miles as the crow flies from Tabriz to Ispahan, and not much farther by way of the ancient caravan route; for the old merchants that carried the first commerce of the Persian Gulf to the provinces of the north had the instinct of birds of passage for the straight line. Judith will remember till she dies that long swift journey to the ancient capital of Iran —the wonderful *Nisf-i Jahan*, or "Half the World," as it was called in the days when Shah Abbas the Great ruled with a rod of iron over the Eastern world.

Each day's journey in the large post-carriage drawn by four lean, galloping horses took them farther into the south. The earth became darker, the grass greener, gardens and orchards took on deeper hues and a hazy light spread a soft glow over the landscape. They galloped through tiny villages set in vineyards, they camped at noon under gigantic plane-trees, and halted for the night at mud caravanserais, where, after the hard day's journey in the stimulating air, they slept undisturbed by the moaning and bubbling of the camels, the familiarities of the caravan dogs or the attacks of relentless insects.

They were able to reel off the miles as no native traveler ever thinks of doing, for their way was cleared before them and their wheels oiled by the outrider Nusr-ed-Deen sent ahead. At each rest-house, fresh horses awaited them; arrangements for food and fodder had been made; and there was no delay and no discomfort that could be avoided by careful forethought. And yet Judy's face began to show traces of the mental and physical strain she suffered long before the journey was half accomplished. Her mood of exhilaration was succeeded by a determination that kept her tense and feverish, to reach Persepolis before Wolkonsky or his agents could do so, to find the plans or defend their hiding-place, and thus to save the day that had been almost lost through what she called her fault.

Fast as they traveled, for her the pace was never fast enough. Time after time Jaggard had to remind her that sitting on the edge of a carriage seat with her hands clenched and her eyes straining ahead, did not help the horses and used up her own strength. With a long sigh she would settle herself more comfortably in her corner of the post-carriage and make Jaggard go over again his calculations concerning the number of days it would take for her lost packet to reach Wolkonsky's hands, supposing him to be in Teheran.

The result of this calculation always seemed to give her new strength, for Jaggard declared that unless some accident happened to them on the road they would roll into Ispahan before Wolkonsky could possibly reach there.

"Of course," Judith always finished up these discussions, "we are taking it for granted that he or Miss Arlundsen can make out the cipher—which is impossible."

"Then why are you racing down there to forestall him?"

"It isn't because I haven't faith in our cipher!" she would cry, "but because I've begun to learn that in the Game you can never take anything for granted. I lost my map because I took Miss Arlundsen's honesty for granted, and I'm not going to make another mistake for the same reason."

"You've got the right idea," said Jaggard. "You're learning the Game! What if you should find Savidge Sahib waiting for you in Ispahan?"

Her eyes widened and glowed.

"Why, then," she said simply, "everything would be all right!"

A curious, bleak look came into Jaggard's face, as if, homeless and solitary, he had glanced through a window and caught a glimpse of another man's lighted hearth. But his voice was almost as blithe as ever when he said:

"Well, whether he's there or not, I'll back you to a showdown. You're game, all the time!"

AS THE heat increased, they traveled often at night when the moon was full and the sky glowed as with white fire and the plane-trees splashed inky shadows across the road. There was an enchantment about these night journeys that lifted them into the realm of the unreal and fantastic. The faint sound of approaching camel-bells became full of uncanny suggestion; and the sight of the shaggy beasts swinging along through the ghostly light sent a shiver up the spine, as if one had seen the Great Sphinx nod in the moonlight.

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These were the only hours of the journey when Judy was able to forget her troubles, in the beauty and mystery of the ancient land. Wrapped in rugs and huddled in the corner of the carriage she often fell into a half drowse, in which the world seemed to stream past her like a pale, luminous sea. Once she awoke suddenly after an uneasy sleep, to see a line of camels drifting silently past, black and weird against the rising moon.

Jaggard, too, was watching the curious sight.

"And on Broadway the shows are over and they're making for the lobster palaces," was his comment.

"And they call it life!" Judy added scornfully.

All the years she had lived in a bronze cage in the overheated air of the Great Southern were now a part of another woman's existence. She could not make even the stories she had dreamed and written seem real, as they had one time been real to her. It seemed as if for years she had been riding on horseback or in a post-carriage, desperately trying to gain some point that lay always miles ahead of her. But in spite of the fatigue and the unreality of that strange, flying journey, there was one reality she never lost sight of: She had failed in a trust, and that failure had to be retrieved.

They rested a night in Hamadan and were off at dawn next day, with never a desire on Judy's part to lose an hour in the bazaars of the rare old town that poets have sung. The necessities of the occasion were calling out in her a stern, practical power of concentration that was stronger even than her imagination or her love of the picturesque.

On the morning of the twelfth day from Tabriz they threaded their way through the maze of walled vineyards, gardens and blossom-laden orchards that ring Ispahan with riotous color and at a distance resemble the variegated pattern of a carpet from the looms of Khorasan. Back of the city rose a range of serrated hills garbed in the velvety verdure of Spring, and against a sky of flawless azure bubbled the turquoise domes of the mosques. Judith looked down on the town and caught her breath.

Of all the cities of Persia, Ispahan is the most beautiful in a garish way. She is the Painted Lady among the cities of the East —powdered, rouged and bedizened, reeking of musk and patchouli, tricked out in tinsel and spangles, roses in her tawny hair and poppies flaming on her breast. Whether seen from the plains or the hills, from the bridges over the Zendah Rud or from the *Meidan* in the heart of the city, the capital of Shah Abbas the Great is a vision that will never fade from the eyes. She is beautiful and superficial and untrustworthy, and the center of idleness and intrigue.

BEFORE noon they had passed into the city. They drove at once to the bazaars flanking the *Meidan* and forced their way through the press of camels, porters, buyers and sellers. Judy had no eyes for what under other circumstances would have been an enchanted scene. The booths with their brocaded goods, saddlery, weapons and armor, lacquered ware and brass, had no attraction for her now; the rattle and beat of the coppersmith's mallet and the brass-worker's hammer fell on heedless ears. She bade Hassan take them at once to a caravanserai.

As soon as a little of the dust of travel had been removed, Judy, accompanied by Jaggard, set out for the telegraph office. They crossed the magnificent *Meidan-i-Shah*, or Imperial Square, level and smooth as a billiard-table; rounded the *Nakarah-Khanah*, the band towers, from which a fanfare of trumpets and a roll of kettle-drums accompany the rising and the setting of the sun; and entered the *Chahar Bagh*, the "Avenue of the Four Gardens," which is the *Champs Elysées* of Ispahan.

Jaggard, familiar with the street, stopped before a low plaster building, the color of which suggested to Judy a well-made tomato soup. The dome was threaded with black wires, and out of the open doors came the drowsy sound of telegraph instruments. Across the avenue under a sycamore tree lounged a native letter-writer, his utensils laid neatly on an ocher-colored cloth.

By his side were the *kalemdan*, or reed-holder, and several rolls of paper. He seemed to be asleep, but a close observer would have noticed that under his half-closed eyelids he watched every movement of the two *farangi*.

In the vernacular Jaggard asked the operator, who was a fine, melancholy browed young Persian, if there was a telegram for Mrs. Savidge. The operator looked through

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his file, flashed his white teeth in a smile, and answered that there had been a telegram for Mrs. Savidge, which that lady had called for, received and carried away with her two hours before.

"What? Say that again!" Jaggard snapped.

The man repeated his statement, this time in broken English. Judy's hands flew to her heart.

"What does he mean?" she gasped.

Jaggard's thumbs mechanically sought the edge of his trousers pockets; he struck his habitual attitude, feet far apart, his head and shoulders thrust forward. For a full minute he studied the man before him. Then he leaned forward across the barrier that stretched between the inner and outer rooms.

"Now, my friend," he said crisply, "let's understand each other. You say a wire came for Mrs. John Savidge, that Mrs. Savidge called for and received it two hours ago. Have I got that straight?"

The operator politely made it clear that this was the exact situation.

"Very well, then; describe this Mrs. Savidge—in English, please."

The man made a gesture of vast admiration. Shorn of much hyperbole his reply indicated that Mrs. Savidge was tall, stately as the young *sarv* tree, with eyes like the Winter sky and hair the color of ripe wheat. The operator was eloquent and manifestly honest.

"You should be a novelist, my son," Jaggard interrupted him dryly, "for as a telegraph-operator you're punk! You've given the message to the wrong lady. This is the real Mrs. Savidge!"

The operator looked limp, and Judy went white to the lips.

"Who got it, then?" she whispered. "It couldn't be——"

"Lina? Surest thing you know! But where did she pass us? We left her in Tabriz—but that doesn't matter now." He turned to the operator. "See here, my friend, you've made a mistake, and the best thing you can do now is to give Mrs. Savidge a duplicate of that wire. Then everything will be agreeable all around, and we'll overlook the incident, see?"

The operator shook his head firmly. Jaggard tried persuasion and threats. The man became moist and mournful, but he remained loyal to the rules of the company. Even the high sign of the brotherhood of the key had no power to move him. And at last they left him unwillingly.

TO BE CONTINUED

The Red Romance

by Kenneth Rand

THERE'S a laugh and a curse on the dim-lit quays—
Ah, liquor and love and a waiting wave!
There's a muffled cry on the languid breeze,
Where the tide-rip sets to the silent seas—
Ah, liquor and love and a waiting wave!

What is it swings by the harbor's rim?
And all in the name o' the Red Romance!
What is it bobs through the shadows dim?
With a knife in the back can a dead man swim?
And all in the name o' the Red Romance!

Oh, it's down to Jones with the bones of the drowned—
Flotsam rides on a following sea—
Where the rolling waves sweep the wide world round,
And the Trade-wind shrieks to the outward-bound—
Flotsam rides on a following sea.

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Beyond A Reasonable Doubt

by Frederick Irving Anderson

PETER THOMPSON had two weaknesses. One was to collect unset diamonds; and the other was to recruit his servants from the exit doors of jails. Not a very cheerful combination of fads; but the possibilities were always interesting, though for a good many years his two hobbies flowed side by side like a song.

It was no one's business about the collecting of the diamonds. He was rich enough to indulge in this fad if he so desired. He always kept several dozen, a nice handful, by him; and each and every one of them came up to specifications set arbitrarily by himself, viz.: weight, two carats; color, blue-white. He never wore them as personal adornment. He merely got them out once in a while to look at and handle.

As to his houseful of thieves he seemed to be struggling under some queer call or other that caused him to haunt the back doors of jails and pick up likely looking individuals who had expiated according to law. He would clothe them in his spike-tail livery and set them to work without so much as a "Now behave yourself!" or "Let me read you a little sermon!" There was a certain spice in visiting him. When his butler helped one into his coat it was always in order instinctively to take an inventory of one's vest-pocket possessions at the first opportunity thereafter.

But nothing ever happened, until——

ONE evening in November there were five of us gathered as his house guests. The first item in the ritual of dining with our queer friend was that of examining his diamonds. It was an amiable weakness and we had grown used to it. They were passed from hand to hand, and after the usual chorus of oh! and ah! he would gather them together, shamelessly count them under our very noses, and put them back in the safe.

His last act before slamming the door and whirling the combination was carefully to

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wipe the metal door of the diamond compartment with a chamois skin.

On this particular occasion there was present a tall, angular Englishman, a ponderous person in speech and manner, named Ormiston Talbot, with an address in Surrey which had to be subjected to severe overcrowding to fit an ordinary visiting card. He called himself a Criminal Investigator, and I believe in his own country he had some wonderful reputation as the personal embodiment of pure reason. Before the butler had served soup, our English friend had recognized that individual as a personage of international reputation in some misguided line or other, a fact which rather tickled our host; because he was no less proud of his collection of thieves than of his diamonds.

There was to be three days' shooting. But we did not shoot. The reason was that when we woke up in the morning the precious diamonds had disappeared. The discovery was made immediately after breakfast, when the Englishman reopened the subject of the rarity of the true blue-white gem, and the delighted Peter Thompson, with the usual hair-trigger enthusiasm of a collector, went to the safe while we stood around, talking.

He laughed a rather foolish laugh. The box was empty.

The safe had not been blown. Some one had opened it who knew the combination.

"That is simple enough," said our Criminal Investigator, who passed easily from his rôle of honored guest to that of expert in charge. "That is simple enough, as I will show you, if you will put this matter in my hands."

PETER was delighted. In fact the situation seemed to please him immensely. For the matter of that, the actual money loss was nothing to cripple a man of his means.

"After you get through—and fail," he said, with a queer glint in his eyes, "I am going to show you how easy it is to unravel your so-called mysteries. I have a little system of my own which I have been waiting five years to try out. On the whole, I think we can find it quite as amusing hunting the thief as splashing around in the mud for three days chasing ducks."

So we all agreed, especially when one of our number happened to be the Element of Pure Reason aforesaid, and when our host took it on himself to laugh in fine scorn at the talents of Talbot and set himself up as the more subtle.

"Very well," drawled the Englishman; and we of the audience settled ourselves comfortably for the contest after feeling for our watches, which were intact.

The professional person called for a camera and a cup of flour as the first-aid implements in his system. These articles were quickly produced—by Peter himself—and after dusting the face of the safe with the flour he photographed it. Peter's face fell, and he began to laugh.

"You are taking the wind out of my sails," he said. "However, go ahead, and let's see your bag of tricks."

After the safe had been posed for its picture, Talbot instructed Peter to twirl the combination; and no sooner was it closed and locked, than that remarkable person set to work to open it under the very eyes of his audience, which he succeeded in doing without so much as a moment's hesitation. Even Peter was impressed.

"Simplest thing in the world," said the professional gentleman. "You remember, when you opened the safe last night, and again this morning, I stood at your elbow. Any child could read the numbers. Seven, eight, four, five. That's it, eh? Now, Thompson," he went on, without pausing to take note of the gasps of astonishment that passed around the circle, "have you ever opened that safe in the presence of your servants? Yes? I suppose so. That is part of your scheme of giving these benighted creatures a chance to begin life anew in their favorite calling. For, don't fool yourself," he said, shaking his finger at Peter, "that you have saved any brands from the burning by giving these people you have here nice snug jobs.

"When a man's talents fit him for the easy-going of tapping safes, he isn't going to be satisfied long with washing dishes and waiting on your door at the wages you pay him. Your butler, for instance, served a term in Surrey fifteen years ago for as neat a piece of till-tapping as ever came to my knowledge. How many of these jailbirds have you got in the house?"

"Six," admitted our host, somewhat nettled at the rather sneering tone the Englishman had assumed toward the end of his discourse. "But, believe me, there isn't

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one of them who could get into that safe without being caught red-handed. However, go ahead with your science."

THE expert opened the safe and, without touching anything, began examining the inside carefully. The compartment that had held the gems was closed by a highly polished nickel-plated door. Talbot indulged in a chuckle.

"Aw, I say," he said, laughing outright, "I am afraid I will have to take the wind out of your sails altogether, Thompson. This combination is simpler than the one on the front door. I can tell you with my eyes shut just what sort of a trap you have baited for the one member of your back-stairs family who might turn crook again. Shall I do it?"

He smiled easily, as though the situation were child's play.

"Go ahead," said Peter.

"Every time you put your precious diamonds back in that compartment, you wipe off the nickel-plated door with a rag. Eh, what? You did it last night, at any rate. You admit having six thieves in your employ."

He waved his hand, as though to brush aside the contention on the part of his host that the six were not necessarily thieves now merely because of their prison background.

"Naturally you are cautious enough to arm yourself with their records. You have their *portrait parler* cards, eh? And their finger-print records, of course. Very wise, indeed, Thompson. I congratulate you. Any one of them touching that compartment must have left his signature in the shape of a finger-mark. Very neat, I am sure."

Thompson admitted that this had been his sole means of identifying his criminal should one fall by the wayside and make an attempt on his diamonds. And thus ended the contest of wits that Peter had promised us when the expert set to work to unravel the mystery. They proceeded together from this point, taking a photograph of the nickel-plated door; and half an hour later, when the plates had been half-dried with the aid of alcohol and an electric fan, magnifying-glasses in hand, they were trailing the thief by the rather narrow mathematical method that takes most of the romance out of the business.

But something went wrong. Whoever had pried open that inner door must have bungled outrageously in this last step that was to gain him the handful of glittering gems. The plate was covered with finger-marks. But the strange part of it was that it established a clean bill of health for the six known criminals in the house.

Even Peter was startled by this surprising discovery. He compared the thumb-print signatures with the six records time and again. Even a tyro could have arrived at the answer. None of the six had touched that safe.

Up to this point the game had been more or less of a diversion to Peter. The money loss meant nothing. By painstaking search, such as delighted him, he might get together another collection of stones quite as fine as this one. The suspicion that one of his fine jail-birds had reverted to thieving again probably hurt him some. But after all, I think he was rather welcoming the opportunity of trying out the little system that he had kept primed and cocked for just such an emergency.

"The house was not entered last night," he said. "Besides, no mere burglar would have gone so unerringly to this single compartment and left everything else untouched."

"No," said the crime specialist slowly; and he permitted his gaze to travel around the open-mouthed circle before whom he had set out so glibly to demonstrate his own cleverness.

We looked at each other sheepishly. Evidently there was a diamond connoisseur among us.

"You are positive you have the thumb signature of the thief there?" asked White, in his thin high voice.

White had been sitting beside me during the strange séance that had barked up the wrong tree.

"Absolutely," said Peter, somewhat embarrassed now at the turn affairs had taken.

"Have you an ink-pad?" asked White; and it was produced on the spot. White tamped his thumb on it and made a print on a sheet of paper.

"See if I am the thief," he said dryly.

"No, Jake, you don't qualify," laughed Thompson nervously, as he compared this new specimen with the negative. I was next; then Iverson, Greene and the Englishman.

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"That eliminates every living soul in the house except you and the cat," said the Englishman to Peter. Peter grinned good-naturedly and made a print of his own thumb.

"Good God!" he said; and sprang to his feet staring at us.

TALBOT picked up the sheet of paper that dropped from Peter's hand and compared it with the negative. He looked slowly from the imprint to our host, who was staring at him with that peculiar dashed expression of one suddenly swept from his moorings. I think Talbot was inclined to laugh, but thought better of it. There was a long silence, which ended in one of those foolish impulses on the part of every one present to say something.

"Tell me," said Talbot deliberately, mouthing his cigar, "did you ever do any sleep-walking, to your own certain knowledge, Thompson?"

There was an involuntary movement in the circle.

"Never! Never in my life," cried Peter, with surprising vehemence.

He sat down now, trembling a little.

"We were talking of these stones just before we smoked our good-night cigar last night," said Talbot.

"Yes—yes."

"And this morning they are gone."

The Englishman went over to the gun-case and began taking stock of the fine collection that Peter always kept by him. He picked them out one by one, balanced them, sighted them, broke them, squinted through the barrels, went through the usual antics of a sportsman with a new piece in his hands.

"You needn't look so bally glum over it, Thompson," he said suddenly. "Why, last Winter——" and he started forth on a stream of instances (in which the principals invariably ended either in the insane asylum or the morgue) with the usual tact of a cultivated Englishman among a crowd of provincials such as we.

The rest of us did our best to bridge the awkward gap by laughing it off; but when a man starts out to run down a robbery, and lays it up at his own door by an infallible system as simple as a-b-c, there isn't much real side-splitting humor about it.

II

PETER was cut deep. He mooned around the house all morning, forgetting all about the ducks that had brought us from town. Before noon most of us had contrived some excuse to get back to town. But he wouldn't hear of it; and the fact that there were no trains until Monday morning in this jumping-off spot where he had chosen to stick up his elaborate shooting-lodge practically made us prisoners.

After lunch he got himself in hand better and tried to make a joke of it; but he laughed a little too loud to convince any of us that he was not carrying a weight. Of course at no stage of the proceedings was there any suggestion of calling in the police. In the first place there was Talbot, and then my friend White, who, when he bestirred himself, could see through a stone wall.

"What do you think of it, Jake?" I asked White when we were alone at bedtime.

"Devilishly awkward mess," he said.

"Sleep-walking is common enough, I suppose, especially with a crank like Peter. How about this thumb-print business, though?"

"The men—who have most to do with it—say you can't—beat it," said White, in his peculiar halting phrases.

"I don't suppose," he went on, "that it's exactly—correct form—to do spying—in a friend's house—where one is a guest."

He looked comically at me; but my blood stirred because I could see that the old hound was nosing the air—and White in action was an interesting spectacle.

"Go to it, Jake!" I whispered excitedly. "I have a sneaking idea that our friend Peter needs help in this business."

He nodded. He had made up his mind. We sat smoking for another two hours (beastly habits one gets in the newspaper business), and when the clock struck one, White opened the door and crossed the hall to Peter's door, to which he affixed a piece of soft gum. The sleep-walker, if he were such, could not leave his room to-night without our knowing it. Then we put out the light and waited. After a little time the door opposite opened cautiously. Peter Thompson appeared bearing a small candle!

He was not asleep. Any one who has ever encountered a somnambulist could have told that at a glance. As the door opened, the

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telltale gum dropped to the floor with a little pat. Peter heard it. He stooped and searched the floor, and found it, examining it curiously as he picked it up. He seemed to understand. He closed the door carefully and looked up and down the hall. We crouched in the shadow where he could not see us. He searched the door-jamb with his candle and found the tiny wet spot where the gum had been affixed, and he put it back carefully. His face was a puzzle.

Five minutes after he had gone down the hall, White followed him in his stocking-feet. It was half an hour before White returned.

"Our friend Peter is hard hit," he whispered. "He is sitting down there in front of that safe, doing nothing but wag his head."

WE WAITED for him to come back, but at daylight we dropped off to sleep. When we got up, however, at seven, the telltale gum was in its place. Over the transom came the sounds of some one tossing uneasily in his bed. Peter Thompson was in his own room without a doubt, yet how did he get there?"

"It's easy," said White at length. "He knows some one is watching him. He doesn't know whether it is one of us, or one of his houseful of thieves. He must have climbed in the window over the porch."

The day opened wet and drizzly. Talbot and Iverson and Greene were keen for ducks. Thompson, pop-eyed from loss of sleep, and nervous, appeared in corduroys and slicker, with the announcement that he was off for the marsh alone or with any one who wanted to follow.

White thought himself too comfortable to go ducking, especially on Sunday. I had discovered a treatise on agriculture (I am a crank on the theory of it, never having followed a furrow in my life), which, it seemed, must occupy my attention for the rest of the morning. They were gone half an hour when the butler moved through the room, picking up the ash-trays.

"Hello, Raymond," said White quietly, without looking up from his book.

The man said, "How are you, Mr. White?" though he started.

All men, strong and weak, have the habit of wincing when they get out of jail and are called by their right names.

"You know me, I see," went on White, still pursuing his book.

"It's eight years, isn't it, sir?" And then, mumbling a little, he said, "Captain Burke, he was a cruel hard man, sir."

"He is no friend of mine," said White shortly.

He raised his eyes and looked sharply at the poor figure in front of him.

"Mr. Thompson—" he said, "he is—a—good man—eh?"

The butler made a magnificent gesture, simple yet eloquent. His eyes softened for an instant.

"He was robbed night before last," said White, in his quiet even tones.

"Mr. Thompson—robbed!"

When a man broods through the long nights of eight years in a prison cell, there is nothing much left but the whipped dog. This one cast a frightened glance at White, whom he instinctively associated with the law. He looked furtively around the room and almost cringed. Suddenly his hands went into the air.

"I swear—I swear it—Mr. White! Listen——" and he burst forth into passionate utterance of his debt to the man who had taken him in.

He talked rapidly, incoherently. Thompson, it seemed, had buried his wife, and found his little daughter and put her away in some school. We learned a good many unsuspected things about our queer friend Peter in that brief outburst. And it wasn't Raymond the butler, alone. The servants' hall worshiped their master. White rose and put his hand on the man's shoulder.

"First," he said, "keep your mouth shut. Second, see that all the servants are downstairs—in the back—of the house. Then, come up-stairs to me. Ware," said he turning to me, "keep your eye on that window. Whistle, if any one comes."

AND he was gone, though on what lead in this curious affair I could not even surmise. I moved over to the veranda window, from which I had a clear view of the stretch of scrub-land leading away to the marsh. A cold drizzle was falling, and I could not help wondering at the misplaced enthusiasm that would lead a civilized man out with a dog and gun on such a day, when there was a cozy fire inside, and books on nitrogen-fixing bacteria and green manures ready to confide their

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secrets to any one interested. There was no sign of them returning.

I sat looking out of the window a few minutes; and then, I must confess, I became hopelessly involved in the new theory of plant-food as applied to agricultural economics. Because I was suddenly startled into the sense of having slept on post, by the drawling voice of Talbot at my very elbow.

"Beastly sour weather," he was saying. "I'm wet to the skin, you know, and if I don't get a hot tub——"

He was running up the stairs before I was fairly alive to the situation. Whatever White might be doing on the guest-room floor, he didn't want this person to run into him.

"I say, wait a bit," I exclaimed in a loud voice.

"My dear fellow," said he, "I am afraid you will have to wait a bit on me. I'm goose-flesh, and all that, you know."

And he was gone. I stood cursing myself for my stupidity; and in that moment it happened. I heard a snarl of rage and a scuffle of feet. I sprang up the stairs three steps at a time. Talbot's door was open. I looked in. The Englishman was in the muscular grasp of John the butler, powerless with his arms pinioned behind him. White was leaning against the bed, examining a small brass box he held in his hand, and he was saying:

"The less noise—the better—for you—my friend. I expect you wear—a money-belt, eh—like the rest of your kind?"

And paying no more attention to the struggling, snarling Talbot than if he had been a dummy, he coolly ripped open the man's wet vest and bared him to the skin. There was a money-belt, which he tore off with no gentle hand.

"I expect you have—frisked a crook or two—in your time," said White as he carried the thing over to the table by the window. "How do you like it—on yourself—eh?"

He opened a bulging compartment and emptied the contents—twenty-four diamonds—on the table!

"I can handle him myself, now," he said. "You, John, go back to your kitchen crew, and you, Ware, watch out for the rest coming back. Not a word of this, either of you. Remember, and look sharp!"

The butler released his prisoner, but looked rather dubiously from Talbot—tall, raw-boned, and muscular—to the slight White, a look which the latter caught and interpreted with a laugh.

"Don't worry, John," he said. "Mr. Talbot and I—have some things—we want to talk over—heart to heart."

I did not attempt to fathom it. It was beyond my depth. Talbot was completely cowed, and I had no doubt that White could handle him in his own peculiar way without my clumsy help. So I took my large lump of unsatisfied curiosity down-stairs with me, and tried to bury myself in a new chapter on the yeasts of the soil. As I descended the stairs I could not help overhearing White's high thin voice, beginning, "So you came over here to study American crime and criminals, eh?" The door closed on the rest of it, but I have no doubt that what followed was interesting.

It was another hour before White and Talbot came down. The latter was spick and span from his hot tub and change. He and White seemed to understand each other perfectly. No one said anything. Indeed, what was there to say? We all pretended to be interested in our books or in the rain outside.

Just before lunch the gunners came in, splashed with mud and wet from head to foot, and without a single duck to show for their privations. John appeared, bearing a tray, and liberal offerings of Scotch. He was a perfect butler, an automaton who saw nothing, heard nothing, had no thoughts of his own. I marveled at his bland countenance, even aped it, as he silently served us one by one, and we drank. Talbot took his glass with a hand that did not shake.

WHEN we got to the coffee and cigars at lunch, White said casually that he had to get to the telegraph station to get off a wire concerning some business he had neglected in his quick get-away from town, and he asked Peter for a closed carriage.

"I'll take the drive with you, if you want company," said Talbot, examining the end of his cigar; which apparently was exactly the thing White expected him to say, and a little while later we saw them off, though Peter grumbled at being robbed of two guests for the afternoon.

The carriage did not return until just before dinner, and then White was alone. To

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the exclamations of surprise he said gravely,

"I'll tell you all about it when we sit down to dinner."

Then he had his little joke. The butler set the soup-tureen, a fine piece of silver with a heavy cover, in front of Peter, and when Peter lifted the cover there were the diamonds! Peter's amazement left him speechless for an instant! He turned and looked at his butler, inquiry, searching question, in his glance. Then his face went ashen pale, and he arose and put his hand on the butler's arm. His voice faltered as he cried:

"No — John, no! No! Don't tell me——"

The butler smiled and shook his head.

"Mr. White will tell you," he said; and we all turned to White. Briefly, and with many haltings—for it isn't cheerful business explaining to one's host that one of his guests is a sneak-thief—White related the circumstances that had so abruptly terminated his search of Talbot's room.

"If there were any way out of it," he concluded, "I would have spared you this —Peter. But—I think—an explanation— is owing to all—of us. Especially to you —Peter."

"But I don't understand. How did you suspect him in the first place? The finger-prints, and all that. Why, the evidence was absolute that I was the only one to touch the safe!"

White produced the small brass box I had seen in his hand in Talbot's room. He opened it and shook out a dozen or so translucent wafers, and passed them around the table.

"See what you make of them," he said.

The wafers were of soft sheet gelatin, about the size of a silver half-dollar. We looked askance at him. For answer, he took one of them, wetted it, and wrapped it around his thumb neatly, like a patch of court-plaster. He put a drop of olive-oil on it, swabbed it, and wiped it dry. John the butler seemed in the secret. He set the ink-pad at White's elbow, and White tamped the pad and made a print with his thumb on a piece of paper.

He handed the print—it was a thumb-print—to Peter; and Peter, a suspicion slowly dawning on his mind, got up and went to the library, returning with the collection of prints we had made the morning of the robbery.

"Gad! It's mine!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, yours," said White. "They say a thumb-print can't be forged. Here are a dozen of them, forged. I don't know— who the others are—probably material for future week-end visits—but this one" (he pointed to the gelatin patch on his thumb) "is yours, Peter!"

THEN the whole thing was clear. The thumb-print forger, with this collection, could leave the thumb-signature of any one, of all, of the dozen, on any job he chose. And, with devilish ingenuity in this job, he had chosen to use the thumb-print of his host, to impute the most confounding of all possibilities—that of a sleep-walker who robs himself.

"I found these in his bag," explained White, as we shot questions at him. "Rather raw, eh, to go—through the gear —of a fellow guest? This thumb-print business—has been bothering me—for a long time. I always had an idea—that a clever man—could beat it. This man Talbot—was a little too smooth—in the demonstration of his powers—the other morning. A little too satisfied. And he slipped up at one point."

"How? Where?" asked all of us together.

There had been no flaw in the demonstration, that we had seen.

"He was a little—too anxious—for the climax," explained White. "He didn't wait —for that negative—to dry thoroughly. You have all noticed—that a negative— just before it is dry—shows the picture—in strong relief—like a printing plate?"

Yes, I had noticed this in dabbling with snap-shotting, but still I did not see the connection with the case in hand.

"That gave the whole snap away. I took a chance—went through his bag. And I found—this tinful of corn-plasters. Put the glass on them, and you will see they are thumb-lines in relief."

Such was indeed the case. Under a strong glass, the gelatin wafers proved to be practically a positive mold of a man's thumb.

"Gelatin," explained Peter, who had come to his senses (and I think now he was more interested in the scientific deviltry of the case than he was in the fact of Talbot's being a thief), "Gelatin, treated with bichromate of potash, is sensitive to light.

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Photograph a thumb-print on it, wash it in water, and presto! you have a reproduction of the lines, as clean as type. Is that the idea?"

"Precisely," said White. "The process is as old as photography. They use it in making photogravure imitations—and very fine ones they make, too. Gelatin treated in that way has all the properties of a lithographic stone."

We were all talking at once now, and experimenting with the dozen wafers, and speculating as to their owners.

"What's become of Talbot?" asked Peter suddenly.

"I thought, Peter—you wouldn't want the scandal of a public accusation. He is pretty badly singed—and glad enough to get away—scot-free. I put him up at—your village hotel—if you call it a hotel. That's punishment enough for any man. He takes the first train out—in the morning; and when he gets to town—a friend of mine will pick him up—without his knowing it—and keep a fatherly eye on him. I gave him—three days to pick out a boat—for the other side of the pond. He'll go, I feel sure.

"It's merely another case," concluded White, "of a man with a talent for crime—not being content with the humble returns—of a criminal investigator."

In the Red Glare of Friedland

By Joseph Mills Hanson

"CAN you, sir, an officer of the Grand Army, pretend to offer any excuse for cowardice in the face of the enemy?"

"I should never offer excuse for any cowardice, Colonel De Launey. But I do not hesitate to say that in my opinion my men were not guilty of cowardice. For a moment they lost their heads, thinking, in the darkness and confusion, that the cavalry rushing down the Altkirch road were Cossacks. Until then they held their position gallantly against fearful odds."

"Faugh! If they had been Cossacks, was not that more reason why you should have held out even to annihilation? Are you, Captain Comtesse, commanding toddling infants, who run from shadows? Your company breaks and opens the center to the Russian attack; the regiment is split, and so the division and Ney's whole corps is forced out of its position, out of the cantonments, back to the river!

"A fine honor, sir, to fall upon the regiment of Aurillac, which covered itself with glory at Austerlitz and was first of the corps on the Landgrafenburg at Jena! Why, the Marshal himself has frowned upon me for my regiment's conduct; even the Emperor may take notice of it. You and your chas-

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seur company are disgraced! Chasseurs, indeed! Picked men! They are poltroons!"

While he was speaking, both the voice and the anger of the veteran Colonel rose rapidly, and as he hissed the last hateful epithet between his teeth the young officer before him winced as if he had been lashed across the eyes with a whip. He half raised his hand as if to ward off another blow and his face turned white. It seemed for an instant that he would reply hotly, but when he spoke his voice was quiet and respectful, though it trembled with emotion.

"Colonel De Launey," he said, "your company of chasseurs have often earned your commendation in the past. If they have now forfeited your regard, I, their Captain, can only say how bitterly we feel it. But I promise you that when next we come to face the enemy we shall try to bear ourselves in such fashion as will wipe out any stain which rests on us now."

"It will take a marvelous deal of fighting, Captain Comtesse, to blot from memory such a day's work as this! Listen. I have just received orders that we march at daybreak with the division on the road to Deppen. Instead of your company taking the advance as heretofore when we form column, it will take the rear!"

The Captain sprang forward, his hands extended beseechingly.

"Colonel," he cried, "not that! Not that!"

"Your company will take the rear," repeated De Launey firmly. "You hear my order; obey it."

He nodded in sign of dismissal, and Captain Comtesse turned and walked slowly away. His shoulders were stooped as if under a load too great for their strength.

IT WAS the evening of the fifth day of June, 1807, and since early morning Marshal Ney's corps, thrown out in a perilous salient beyond the main line of the Grand Army, had been engaged in a losing struggle with the close-massed columns of the Russian army under Count Levin Bennigsen, who at dawn had unexpectedly assumed the offensive, unawed by the fear of that mighty antagonist who, only a few months before, had humbled Prussia in the blood-darkened dust of Jena and Auerstadt. The doughty Russian commander had lost some of his dread of the French war-god in the preceding Winter, when he had maintained himself successfully at Eylau and rendered fruitless the sally of Napoleon from his cantonments in Poland, near the Russian frontier.

Now that Spring had come, he had hoped, by striking quickly, to catch the invader unawares and to annihilate one of his strongest corps before it could either retreat or receive succor. It was not altogether the fault of the regiment of Colonel De Launey, which had held the very apex of the salient when the attack commenced before dawn, that the French line had been broken. Against the overwhelming columns of the enemy the little handful of infantrymen of the line had fought blindly, desperately.

No fault could have been found with any of them had not the one company of chasseurs yielded their position at last, not to the tremendous pressure of the Russian masses in front, but to the unexpected appearance in their rear of a column of cavalry which they took for Cossacks, but which turned out, instead, to be of their own forces. Burning with chagrin that he had been compelled to abandon his ground even under such circumstances, the Colonel turned upon the unfortunate company as the origin of his defeat, and it was now being forced to feel the effects of his wrath.

Captain Comtesse, with lowered eyes, walked slowly past the crackling camp-fires of his regiment under the trees above the banks of the Passarge River. Around them the weary men were eating their homely evening meal. Beyond the dark abyss of the stream myriads of other fires twinkled into the distance, while far away to the north and west the sky glowed as from a great conflagration with the reflected light of the enemy's bivouacs.

The young officer, keenly sensitive to every sign that others might share the feelings of the Colonel toward him and his men, could not fail to notice the constrained silence which fell upon each camp-fire group as he passed by. Even the officers, his comrades of many a hard-fought field, either spoke curtly to him or turned deliberately away when he drew near—so quickly may the contagion of distrust spread even among those who are nearest and dearest to us. He felt himself suddenly an outcast among his kind, more lonely than if he had suddenly been cast into the depths of some unknown forest.

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With wretchedness gnawing at his heart he at last gained the fires of his own company, at the upper end of the regimental bivouac. But his courage, which never forsook him before the muskets of the enemies of France, failed him when he stood among his men and tried to tell them of the disgrace which had fallen upon them. His senior lieutenant, the friend and more than brother whom he longed for above all at this moment, had now been lying for hours still and cold out somewhere in the bushes beside the Altkirch road.

He drew aside his junior lieutenant, Gaston Passy, and revealed to him the result of his interview with the Colonel. The boy, for he was little more, clenched his hands and wept tears of humiliation. Then they went back, called the stalwart soldiers about them and Comtesse at last found his voice.

"Chasseurs," said he, "this morning we fought the Russians before daylight. They were many for us, but we held them until you thought the Cossacks had cut us off. Then we gave ground and afterward found we had been mistaken. For this, chasseurs, we are disgraced. To-morrow morning the regiment will march past us here and we must fall in the rear!"

FOR a moment there was no sound. They scarcely breathed, but stood aghast, the firelight playing on their startled faces. Then a soldier in the back of the group uttered an imprecation, and a sergeant at the Captain's elbow caught a sharp breath and said savagely

"Is this our reward, then, for fighting like Mamelukes from Marengo to Eylau? Mother Mary, I had better have saved the flesh I have had shot out of me!"

The Captain seized him by the arm and looked into his eyes.

"Robidou," said he, "remember, there will be other fights. And I warrant after the next one the chasseurs of the Aurillac regiment will be lighter by many pounds of flesh than now. This is only the beginning. We are Frenchmen."

A voice in the background, it was that of a private, cried out,

"Aye, Captain, but why should the soldiers of the Emperor be humiliated, who have risked their necks willingly for him so many times?"

Comtesse looked steadily toward the speaker. He did not resent the question; it was merely an evidence of the comradeship between officers and men, which, escaping familiarity, was one of the sinews of strength in the armies of the First Empire.

"Have you?" questioned he in turn. "That is not for me to answer, friend. Myself, I am fighting for the honor of France."

Comtesse might have been a Major after Jena, had he not there made a similar remark in the presence of a brigade commander who owed his own promotion to the direct grace of the Emperor. This officer recollected that Comtesse came of a minor family of the old Bourbon aristocracy and he cannily omitted from his report the mention of the young Captain's gallantry which he had contemplated. He mistrusted the drift of his subordinate's thoughts, since his own mind could conjure up no image of patriotism transcending allegiance to the Corsican.

The Captain was very quiet as, one by one, his men, weary in body and sore in spirit, wrapped themselves in their blankets and stretched out on the ground to sleep. He sat on a stump to one side of the fire, now and then tossing a chip into the flames. In this new trouble his heart ached for the touch of a hand that had been on his shoulder last night; that hand which now lay still out in the bushes beside the Altkirch road. Across the fire from him sat Passy, anxiously watching his face. At length, when all around was still, the latter spoke.

"Henri," said he softly, "underneath the cynicism you sometimes show, do you not truly love and honor the Emperor?"

Comtesse glanced up, startled from his reverie. Here was one friend left, sure enough; but, alas, only a boy!

"The Emperor? Why, yes, Gaston, I honor him. He is the greatest man France ever produced; therefore I honor him. As for love——" he tossed a chip into the fire. "Well, I love France."

"But he *is* France," insisted the boy earnestly. "He is the embodiment of her greatness."

"True. And to that extent I love him. But, Gaston, a disgrace of the type we will undergo to-morrow is a result of military despotism, all the same. One of my ancestors marched against Rome with Charles the Eighth; another fought at Phillipsburg under Marshal Berwick. Perhaps one

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shouted that Charles was the greatness of France and the other later swore by Louis the Fifteenth. I was too young to see much of our Revolution, but I have not been too young to think of it, and it has rid me of some of the old, aristocratic notions of my family.

"Men are men, whether nobles or peasants. But, above all, France is France, whether a kingdom or a republic or an empire. She is not a Bourbon nor a Jacobin nor a Bonapartist, but the trunk of a great racial tree struggling up through the brambles, and some time she will come to her true blossoming and fruit. That is why I am loyal to the Emperor; because I am loyal to anything that makes for the ultimate greatness of France! Napoleon is giving her glorious traditions."

Passy shook his head hopelessly.

"I can not understand you, Henri," he said, rising and unfolding his blankets. "You talk in the clouds. No good ever came to France through the Bourbons; they were tyrants. But Napoleon! Why, he has already made her mistress of the world."

Comtesse only smiled at him. Truly, he was but a boy.

THE Captain had said to his men that this evening's events were only the beginning. They proved, surely enough, to be only the beginning of martyrdom for the Aurillac chasseurs.

When the regiment swung into column next morning and marched by the unfortunates, standing shamefaced beside the path, the passing soldiers looked at them first with surprise and then with derision. The jaunty chasseurs, who always led the van, were now to take the rear! It was a good joke, whatever the cause, and the roughened campaigners could not resist its humor.

They began bandying rude jests and, though sternly hushed by their officers, the latter took little pains to conceal their own amusement. Comtesse had difficulty in restraining Passy from striking a company officer who looked at him with a sneering smile. As for the men, they were ready to thrust bayonets into the bodies of their regimental fellows.

So it continued through the day, after Ney's discomfited corps had extricated itself from the toils of the Russian flanking columns and fallen back safely across the bridges of the Passarge, where Bernadotte and Soult covered its left and Davout its right. A chasseur company was to be known anywhere, and to see it marching in the rear of its regiment excited merriment wherever that regiment passed. The soldiers of Captain Comtesse at last relaxed from profane anger to sullen silence, and as the days went on gave no heed to the jests flung at them save to glance venomously under frowning brows at the mockers. They were bearing their punishment stolidly, but within them burned smothered fires which promised to flash out balefully at whatever enemy might be so unfortunate as to first cross their path.

After having given back under the first unexpected blow, the Grand Army, directed by the consummate skill of its chieftain, was again gathering head and pushing forward on its relentless course toward the Russian capital. The imperial headquarters came up to the center of operations, the widespread corps concentrated upon a deeper and narrower front, which, steadily advancing, was so skilfully directed as to cut through one after another of the enemy's lines of retreat while as skilfully its own communications were safely covered. Other corps were directed in ahead of Ney. He became part of the reserve, together with the Guard under Victor.

SO, THROUGH the afternoon and evening of June tenth, Ney's impatient men were too far away to do aught but listen to the thunder of the guns around Heilsburg, where the French advance was uselessly hurling itself upon a mighty line of Russian entrenchments, which never fell, for all the blood spilled over them, until the Emperor's flanking columns had swept around and threatened the retreat of the garrison. It was small wonder that the soldiers of the Grand Army, after such days of work, mopped their brows and exclaimed,

"These Russians fight like bulls!"

They had never found such worthy antagonists in western Europe. It was a sinister warning of what was to befall five years later along the road from Moscow.

But from Heilsburg, Bennigsen fell back because he had been cut off from his base at Königsberg on the Baltic Sea and was compelled to cover a new line of retreat by Tilsit into the Czar's domains. He retired

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down the bank of the Alle River and on the early morning of June fourteenth came to the town of Friedland, just in time to drive out of it a regiment of French cavalry which had arrived the moment before. It belonged to the advancing corps of Marshal Lannes. The Muscovite commander, believing Lannes to be far from the rest of the Grand Army, committed the indiscretion of throwing part of his forces across the river, thinking to crush this French detachment and then, withdrawing, to continue his retreat unmolested.

In placing the river between himself and safety he grievously underestimated the sagacity of his foe. Lannes sent word of the enemy's presence to the Emperor and meanwhile held his position stubbornly. Bennigsen brought division after division across the river and by midmorning most of his army was over, striving sturdily to encompass and overwhelm the invaders. Other French corps swung out of their roads to Lannes's support, and at noon the Emperor himself came up, galloping. He saw the situation at a glance and was overjoyed.

"It is the fourteenth of June," he exclaimed, "the anniversary of Marengo; it is a lucky day for us."

The Russians did not yet comprehend. Farther and farther their lines of battle spread, seeking to contain the French flanks. Four divisions under Prince Bagration held the left, backed by a great curve of the Alle above Friedland; three divisions and an imposing body of cavalry under Gortchakov stretched out across the fields to the right.

Close behind them all ran the deep and rapid river, their only route to the other bank being one stone and three pontoon bridges crowded together in the close loop of the river surrounding Friedland. The Russian army was like a prisoner who, to escape, would have to pass through a keyhole.

On the French side the corps of Mortier came in on Lannes's left to meet the extending line of Gortchakov. They played gently with the enemy that he might not take fright before the trap was set. The battle flagged, but presently from the rear came marching up Oudinot and the Guard and Ney, and formed their mighty lines on the right, partly masked from Bagration by the wood of Portlack.

Then, at last, the Emperor, brimming with enthusiasm, issued his orders. They reflected the simplicity of genius. Mortier and Lannes were to hold the enemy in play, even to let him think that by pushing ahead he might regain the road to Königsberg, while on the right, Ney, supported by the Guard, was to advance at the given signal and seize the enemy's bridges.

"You see the Russians and Friedland," cried Napoleon, catching Marshal Ney's arm. "The bridges are there—there only. March right on before you; enter into Friedland; take the bridges, whatever it may cost, and do not disquiet yourself about what shall take place on your right, or your left, or in your rear. That concerns us—the army and me."

WELL in the front of one of the assaulting lines, each of which was composed of a half-brigade, its center battalion deployed and its two flank battalions in column, stood the regiment of Aurillac. Its chasseur company was in its old position on the right, the men standing quietly with fixed bayonets, Comtesse and Passy behind them, swords in hand. No one was laughing at them now; all were thinking of other things. But the men's faces were sternly set, nevertheless, as they watched the white smoke of the Russian batteries drifting up over the woods of Portlack and, far off to the left, the shifting masses of Lannes's troops maneuvering over the hills. Straight in front of them, down a little valley with the spires of Friedland at its far end, stretched a mill brook, the late afternoon sun falling in dazzling radiance on the wide ponds formed by dams at intervals in its course. Its broad expanse severed the Russian right and left wings as completely as a river. To the right and rear of the Aurillac regiment lay the clustered cottages of a little village, Postenen.

At about five o'clock in the afternoon a French battery appeared, galloping up in front of Postenen. The waiting soldiers watched it eagerly. The guns swung into battery, unlimbered and opened fire with a crashing salvo. It was the signal. The mass of infantry crouched forward like some famished monster ready for the spring. Down the lines ran a chorus of commands, followed by a murmur which rose to a shout:

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"Vive l'Empereur! Vive la France!"

As the lines surged forward, the many silent French batteries in position off to the left all at once awoke to furious life. The landscape was blotted out in bellying clouds of powder-smoke, the ground shook with the reverberations. Beyond the fields the Russian batteries, lashed into activity, answered in kind, redoubling the tumult. But Bennigsen had at last discovered that the toils of death were closing about him. As Ney cleared the woods, his men could see dark masses of Russian infantry hurrying back toward Friedland and the bridges, while along the high banks of the Alle beyond the river battery after battery of the reserve artillery was furiously dashing into position to cover the retreat.

The sight maddened the French. Should the foe escape? They put down their heads and charged blindly for the spires of Friedland. The Russian grape tore great gaps in their lines. They closed up and went ahead. A little farther and the steady, intense fire of the Muscovite infantry began to mow them down.

The reserve battalions surged into the front lines and they went on. A moment more and the enemy gave way. A great shout arose from the French. They poured through the gap. But they came upon a solid, advancing wall of troops against which they dashed themselves vainly and in turn reeled back, stunned.

It was the Russian Imperial Guard, a terrible body of warriors, fearlessly led. But behind Ney was marching another Imperial Guard as terrible, that one which was Napoleon's choicest engine of conquest. Majestically as a storm-cloud it came on, cleaving through the disordered ranks in front, and at once the picked men of Gaul and Muscovy closed face to face in a struggle of Titans.

Long and desperately they strove. But it was an equal contest until Senarmont, with all the thirty-six guns of the French Guard, dashed up right against the Russian lines and poured into them a blasting, withering fire.

The shot tore through the huddled troops and on into the houses of Friedland. The town burst into smoke and flames. Nothing could stand against such a storm. The mighty Russian column, shattered, fell into fragments and dissolved in a confused crowd of fugitives fleeing toward the bridges!

THE regiment of Aurillac had been in the thick of it. When the corps gave ground it went, too, but its chasseur company was the last to yield, going back like a board, stiff in line, its men fighting with clenched teeth. Then came Victor. Comtesse brought his handful up beside the Guardsmen and advanced with them. Half his company was gone, but that made no difference. When the last stand of the enemy had been broken and the French paused a moment to reform before rolling on into Friedland, Comtesse dashed the sweat and grime from his face with one hand and with the other pointed to the blazing town, close ahead, through whose narrow streets a cursing, howling multitude of fugitives was streaming, and cried,

"Chasseurs, we have a disgrace to wipe out. Here is the chance! You see that bridge of boats yonder? We will take it, alone. Come!"

They looked toward the bridge and then at him, amazed. Even Passy, his head bound in a bloody rag, caught his breath and exclaimed,

"Henri, you are mad; we shall be annihilated!"

Comtesse laughed recklessly, and slapped his shoulder.

"What, Gaston, you hesitate? It is for our honor and the glory of France—of the Emperor, if you will. It is a feat worthy of Ulysses; it will eclipse the memory of Lodi. Come!"

Casting discretion to the winds, his followers crowded around him and bade him lead the way, and they dashed off in advance of the corps. It was manifestly impossible to reach the bridge by following the Russians into the swarming and smoke-darkened streets of Friedland. The other French troops would come that way, driving the enemy before them, but meantime thousands of the latter would cross the bridge to safety. Every second was precious.

Comtesse and his men were not far from the river-bank. They formed a compact body and charged through the broken torrent of fugitives which was passing between them and the stream. The enemy did not stay them; the bravest men, once panic-smitten, are like sheep. They only fled the faster for seeing the Frenchmen so near.

Once on the bank, the chasseurs moved more quickly still. They were going with

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the universal tide toward the bridges, and in the dusk, which was now gathering, were scarcely noticed by the fugitives moving parallel to them a little distance back from the water's edge. Audacity is often its own best protection.

It was but a run of a few hundred yards until the bridge-head loomed before them, black with a dense throng of men madly battling each other with fists and clawing hands and clubbed muskets for a footing on the narrow road of planks which led to safety. The bridge itself was swaying and groaning under its tremendous load, and every moment from its edges men toppled off with screams and imprecations and disappeared in the swift waters beneath.

Comtesse leaped to the front of his men, waving his sword.

"Charge, chasseurs!" he shouted. "For France, charge!"

They answered with a deep roar, "*Vive l'Empereur!*" and plunged forward.

THEIR coming was like an Alpine avalanche cleaving through a forest. The terrified fugitives faced for but a second their savage muskets, and then, in despair, recoiled upon the congested street behind them. The tide of retreat was broken. But it could only be for a breathing space. The accumulating pressure behind them would surely push the Russians again up to the chasseurs' bayonets. Comtesse eagerly looked about the bridge-head for obstacles to throw in front.

There were plenty, overturned wagons, broken caissons, which in flying had missed the bridge by a wheel's breadth. The chasseurs dragged some of the nearest across the road and crouched behind them. Then the rush came. The fugitives rolled up in no order, but with a fearful impact of sheer mass. The defenders had no time to fire; they could only use the bayonet, and even that not fast enough. It was arm to arm, with hot breath gasping into each other's faces, across the overturned wagons.

Behind the Russians the roaring conflagration of Friedland cast a red glare over their surging sea of heads. Great firebrands whirled aloft toward the darkening sky and fell back among them, still blazing. Along the brow of the cliff beyond the river the hundred and twenty guns of Bennigsen's reserve artillery thundered in an impotent paroxysm of fury, combing the fields and woods of the nether shore with an aimless hurricane of projectiles.

In the vivid streaks of fire vomiting from the pieces, their cannoneers resembled imps dancing on the rim of the Pit. Amidst this hideous nightmare of ferocity and carnage the chasseurs of the Aurillac regiment fought like tigers to hold themselves from being rolled back into the river. Where their triumphant army was, they knew not, but they knew that it would come.

Suddenly through the tossing waves of men in front, Comtesse saw a steady current setting. It was a firmly marching column, and it was not French, for it was not fighting. In reality it was a portion of Gortchakov's right wing, which, still amenable to discipline, was seeking to effect an orderly retreat. Comtesse only knew that here was something more formidable than a frenzied mob.

"Quick, Gaston!" he shouted at Passy, darting back to the first pontoon. "Cut the shore lines; send the bridge adrift."

The two slashed furiously with their swords at the stout cables which held the boats to the bank. It seemed that they would never give way, but at last they parted. The first pontoons swung down-stream, hung a moment as the resistance of balks and chess supported them, then with a splintering and wrenching of broken wood they yielded to the impetuous current and whirled away down the river! Clear out to the first mid-stream anchorage the bridge was gone. A yell of mingled rage and terror arose from the packed shore. Comtesse and Passy dashed back to their men.

IN FRONT of the barricade the steady column was pushing through the crowd of fugitives like a battering-ram. It seemed indifferent alike to them and to the Frenchmen across the path. But there was one relief: the mob had seen its escape cut off and began dissolving in a stream down the bank toward the stone bridge below, which still stood, though the far-cast shells of Ney's guns were beginning to knock its masonry apart.

The chasseurs had a few seconds to load their muskets. Then the level front rank of the column debouched full before them. A blast of bullets flared in the Russians' faces. They wavered, recovered, and with a deep-tongued roar came on again, resistlessly. Their handful of opponents strug-

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gled with superhuman strength. But they would have been thrust, every man, into the waters behind had not two things at that moment happened. First, such of their assailants as topped the barricade discovered from there that the bridge was gone and, appalled, began crowding back on their fellows. Second, a wild clamor broke out in the distance, and the rear of the column fell into fragments before a body of French cavalry which, with hoarse shouts and whirling sabers, came tearing down the furnace-bordered streets of Friedland.

Almost before they could realize it, the chasseurs, who a moment before had thought their career ended, found themselves rescued. They flung out of the barricade to embrace the dragoons of Latour-Maubourg, who had come just in time. Comtesse and Passy staggered back against the wagons, panting for breath, the sweat dripping from them. Then a knot of horsemen, headed by a tall man whose eyes glowed with kingly fire, pushed through the dragoons. The two young officers sprang erect, their swords at salute. It was Marshal Ney.

"Who are you?" he demanded, looking down at them.

"The chasseurs of the regiment Aurillac, Marchand's Division," answered Comtesse.

"Where is your regiment?"

"I do not know, monsieur. We left it to seize this bridge and cut the Russian retreat."

Ney regarded him incredulously. But it was not to be doubted; the evidences of the struggle were on every hand.

"You left your flag because it did not achieve victory fast enough?" exclaimed the Marshal. "That is bad discipline, but such work as you have done forgives it. You are——"

"Captain Comtesse — and Lieutenant Passy."

"Ah, Comtesse! I have heard of you." He looked around at the pitiful remnant of the chasseurs and addressed them. "There are not twenty-five of you left. But all who are left are Spartans. Be assured, chasseurs, you will be rewarded. The Emperor shall hear of this; it is Homeric! Captain Comtesse, Lieutenant Passy, you are worthy of higher rank and you shall have it. Now find your regiment; you have earned rest."

Then he turned, imperious, eager, to the cavalry officer beside him.

"Why are these dragoons standing here? Send them on to the next bridge, and the next; on, after the enemy! He must be given no rest save in the river."

The cavalry, with thundering hoofs, tore away, while Ney and his staff galloped back into crumbling Friedland. The battle was over. Nothing remained to be done except finish the slaughter and capture of the thirty thousand men whom imperial Russia lost that fourteenth of June, in the last battle of the campaign against the conqueror of the Continent. As the latter wrote next day to his wife, Josephine, Friedland was "a worthy sister of Marengo, Austerlitz, Jena."

Eleven days later was to ensue that memorable conference between the Emperors Napoleon and Alexander, on the raft of Tilsit, at which the map of Europe was to be made over and her kingdoms and duchies parceled out anew.

But all that was still ahead as Comtesse and Passy wiped the crimsoned blades in their hands and returned them to the scabbards. With a flash of proud ardor in his eyes, Passy turned to his Captain.

"Now, Henri," he cried, "what of the Emperor and his Marshals? Are they not all a Frenchman can desire? See how they reward devotion!"

The struggle over, his usual manner of quiet dignity had returned to Comtesse. He smiled.

"We will doubtless receive rewards, Gaston," he replied, speaking thoughtfully. "And they will be deserved. But in the end the greatest reward that will come to any of us for this evening's work will be the knowledge that we have given to Frenchmen for all time another glorious tradition to live by and to die by!"

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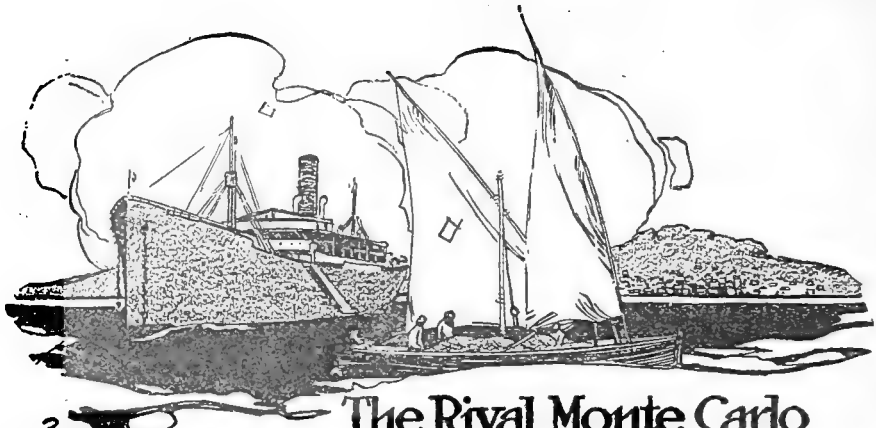

The Rival Monte Carlo
An Episode in the Career of a Gentleman of Fortune

by Max Rittenberg

"THERE is only one Monte Carlo in all Europe," reflected John Hallard aloud, playing carelessly with his pocket roulette watch.

Renie, usually so even-tempered, frowned and clicked her tongue impatiently.

"You know quite well, *chéri*, it's impossible to beat the game at Monte! I thought you'd agreed to give up that notion for good?"

"I have."

"Then what are you driving at?"

"At a Monte No. II," replied her husband dreamily. "A gambling palace of our own. The last word in luxury. Furnishings regardless of expense. Rokeby Venuses on the walls, Tzigany orchestra to inspire one to valorous plunging, exotic perfumes in the air; softly shaded lights; little tables at one's side for drinks and delicacies. We will make Laroche croupier-in-chief. He looks *distinguê* enough to——"

"Rubbish! Even if you had the money to run such a palace, what Government in Europe would allow you to?"

"None, obviously."

"*Chéri*, what's the matter with you tonight?" There was genuine concern in her voice.

Hallard smiled reassurance to her.

"I'm quite sane. In fact, I'm talking uncommon good sense. The scheme is perfectly workable. You remember last week at 'Wellwood,' when you told me that we can't live on the thanks of damsels in distress? That phrase stuck in my mind, and here is the result. We did Nita Dennison a thorough good turn, and lost money by it, and now we owe it to ourselves to recoup out of her clod of a husband. This scheme of Monte No. II is devised for Dennison's benefit."

"Oh, that's it? That's sensible."

"Mind, we don't bring Nita into this at all. All we ask her to do is to invite us to her house for a week-end, so that I can get hold of Dennison for a quiet little business chat."

"I'll manage that," said Renie. "But surely you won't get Dennison to believe that any Government in Europe would pass such a scheme?"

"Why ask them to pass it?" was the reply.

S. WORBY DENNISON had made his money primarily in margarin—a wholesome, useful commodity, and from the business side a perfectly clean proposition. Dennison, however, was snobbish enough to be ashamed of margarin as a source of income. After a long fight with the law to get margarin palmed off on the public as butter—an unsuccessful fight—he cut himself clear of the trade and became associated with Westralian mining and other financing of a not too clean-handed nature. It sounded much

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more dignified than margarin, however, and satisfied Dennison's peculiar code of squeamishness.

He was a big, heavy man, heavy-jowled like a mastiff, with iron-gray hair and iron-gray mustache running into side-whiskers. His habitual expression was one of sullenness, almost of sullen suspicion. Rarely indeed did he thaw into a smile.

But John Hallard knew well how to tackle such a man. From the side of greed he was obviously accessible.

Invited for a week-end to Dennison's beautiful country-house perched on the North Downs between Guildford and Dorking—a house commanding magnificent views over the woods and heaths of Surrey to the north and the tangle of Sussex hills and vales to the south—Hallard sought carefully for the point of contact before enlarging on his scheme.

When he was alone with Dennison in the latter's private den for a good-night glass and smoke, Hallard began in his best "Sir Ralph Kenrick" manner:

"Had a stunnin' idea a couple of months ago. Pots of money in it."

"Why don't you work it?" answered Dennison, his mouth tightening as he scented a pull at his own pocket. "Lack of capital—eh?"

"No, not that; could get the money easy enough. But I'm no business man, you know. That's where I'd fall down on the thing. Now you're no end of a duke at the business game, I know, so I want you to——"

Hallard struck a match and paused for the frown of suspicion he expected. It came, and he continued:

"Want you to put me on to a man who understands how to work the business end."

Dennison's brow cleared at this unexpected finish to the sentence.

"Probably I could help you," he answered. "Let me hear the scheme."

"Of course this is strictly between you and me? Don't want some outsider collarin' hold of my idea, and chippin' in ahead."

"Certainly, quite confidential."

HALLARD began to expound with enthusiasm the idea he had already put before Renie, and his host interrupted him half-way with precisely the same objection as Renie had brought up.

"Impossible! No Government in Europe would sanction it. It's positively absurd!"

"But that's the very point, old man! Don't propose to ask a by-your-leave of any Government. Anchor a liner outside the three-mile limit, and there you are!"

Dennison stiffened abruptly in his chair. The idea had hit him full in the eye.

"Anchor it where?"

"In March, Renie and I were stayin'. at Rapallo. Know the place? On the Italian Riviera—stunnin' scenery and climate and all that sort of thing. I'll anchor my liner out in the Gulf of Tigullio, within five miles off Rapallo, Santa Margherita, Portofino, Zoagli, Chiavari and Sestri. All those places are fitted out with *de luxe* hotels and attract a moneyed crowd. I'll run a fleet of fast motor-launches, and have them all within fifteen minutes of the ship. How's that for a scheme?"

"They won't let you work it under the British flag."

"That's allowed for, too. My liner sails under the flag of Nicaragua, or Morocco, or some other country not too deuced squeamish to turn up its nose at bakshish."

Dennison pulled at his pipe for some time, thinking hard. Then he raised one more objection:

"It sounds plausible enough, but why should people go to your gambling palace rather than to Monte Carlo, eh? I don't see any special advantage for them."

Hallard leaned forward and whispered his answer, as if he were afraid that some one were lurking around on purpose to overhear and filch the great idea.

"I'm a gambler myself," he said, "and I haven't singed my wings at Monte without gettin' to know a thing or two about gamblers. I've invented a little scheme which will fetch 'em like a fire alarm. They'll be tumblin' over one another into my motor-launches soon as they hear of it."

"Well?"

"For six minutes in every hour, the first six minutes," answered Hallard impressively, "zero won't count on my tables. For three clear spins of the marble the chances will be as even as a heads-or-tails. Can't you picture the scrum to pile on stakes for those three spins? I can—I know gamblers. And will they be content to sit still for fifty-four minutes until the golden moment comes round again? Not they—I know gamblers! Once bitten, twice as mad!"

Dennison saw two things very clearly.

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The one, that here was a scheme bubbling over with money possibilities. The other, that here was an inventor of a particularly simple and confiding nature.

The combination looked good to S. Worby Dennison.

II

A WEEK later a 'phone call reached Hallard at his luxurious flat in Queen Anne's Mansions, Westminster. He took up the receiver.

"Hullo! This is Sir Ralph Kenrick—Why, certainly, old man, very pleased to have a chat any time—to-night? Deuced sorry, but I'm off to Cowes for the motor-boat racin'. Back on Thursday—Sorry, you know, but I never let business interfere with pleasure. Suppose you bring your friend along to Cowes?—No? Well, suppose we say Thursday evening, here?—Right ho! Good-by."

Laroche, his confidential man-servant, who had been with Hallard for some years past, was in the room at the time.

"Another little scheme, monsieur?" he asked in French.

His master smiled assent and laid his hand on Laroche's shoulder.

"Something after your own heart. A big-money scheme. A Monte No. II. If it comes off, you get your share as usual."

Laroche's eyes glistened.

"It's not the money that tempts me, monsieur. *Pour moi, c'est l'aventure!*"

ON THE Thursday evening Mr. Dennison brought his friend to Hallard's flat. The name of the newcomer was Louis Ohlmann, and he had been associated with Dennison in many city deals. In appearance and manner he made a complete contrast, having sleek, polished, raven-black hair, a polished black mustache curled up at the ends, and a very easy, pleasant, suave manner. He radiated an easy, friendly atmosphere wherever he went, and in business slang would be classified as "a good mixer."

"Very pleased to hear you carried off the Garfield Cup, Sir Ralph," he said as he shook hands cordially. "Motor-boat racing must be fine sport."

"Not so dusty," agreed Hallard. "What'll you men take to drink?"

Presently Dennison came to the heart of the business for which he had arranged this interview:

"Last week you asked me if I could find a man for you to work the business end of your scheme. Mr. Ohlmann is the very man for your purpose. He——"

Hallard waved away explanations.

"Your recommendation's good enough for me. No need to explain."

The two business men exchanged a momentary glance of mutual understanding. Here was an easy mark indeed.

Dennison got down to essentials.

"With Mr. Ohlmann at the business end, I'm prepared to put some money into this myself. I can also get friends to put up capital. The proposal is to be from a small syndicate, say for two hundred and fifty thousand pounds. That will be ample for the chartering of a liner, fitting her up in proper style, and staking the roulette bank. I suppose you will be ready to put in a hundred thousand pounds of the quarter-million?"

The inner meaning of the proposal was obvious to John Hallard. If he or his friends were to put up one hundred thousand pounds, they would be in a minority of share-holding against the other one hundred and fifty thousand pounds, and Dennison and his friends could practically run the scheme exactly as they pleased to their own profit.

But Hallard had no intention whatever of gambling a sum of that magnitude, even if he had possessed it. He laughed easily and replied:

"While you business men think in hundred thousands, we idlers think in thousands, you know. I'll punt five thou. myself, and of course there'll be some shares allotted me as the inventor of the scheme. I'll trust you to do the square thing by me. Fact is, I've no head for business details. Business bores me, you know. What I want chiefly is the excitement of runnin' a Monte No. II, and then the gettin' back of some of the cash I've chucked away on the roulette board."

"I quite understand you," answered Louis Ohlmann. "You're first and last a sportsman. The best thing will be to leave us to prepare a detailed financial scheme, don't you think?"

"Right ho!"

"You will be director of the social end, with your expert knowledge of the tastes

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and predilections of gamblers—" Hallard smiled assent "—and Mr. Dennison kindly suggests that I shall be business manager."

"Right! Now let's drink a glass to the success of Monte No. II. May the best man win!"

When the draft prospectus of the private limited company, as drawn up by Dennison and his associates, was posted to Hallard, he read it with an angry light in his eyes. In return for the nominal post of Chairman and a bunch of fifty thousand Deferred Shares—which would be worth just precisely what the other directors happened to vote at their individual whim—he was to be saddled with the full legal responsibility for the good faith of the enterprise. If anything contrary to strict legality took place in the gambling palace, Hallard would be the scapegoat. On the other hand, if success crowned the scheme and money came pouring in to the coffers of the company, the inventor would reap only what the other members of the company chose to vote him.

This was the "square deal" they had promised him!

Yet John Hallard signed the papers they had sent him—signed them with a fighting set of the jaw—and returned them to Dennison and Ohlmann.

III

IN THE Autumn Ohlmann took hold of affairs and started vigorously to work. He made a flying visit to Venezuela, and arranged with a complaisant President of that stony-broke country that the floating gamblers' paradise should be allowed to fly the flag of Venezuela without interference in return for a percentage on the profits.

"If the Powers of Europe make a fuss," said the President grandly, "they will have me to deal with!"

Then Ohlmann returned to England and chartered an out-of-date Cape liner of some five thousand tons. Under John Hallard's supervising eye alterations were made to convert it into a luxurious floating hotel and gambling palace. Roulette cylinders were constructed pivoted on gimbals, so as to allow for any possible rolling of the ship, and the whole vessel was refurnished and redecorated in accordance with Hallard's cosmopolitan tastes.

One morning in the following February the newly named S. S. *Fortuna* swung to her moorings in the glorious Gulf of Tigullio, under a blazing Riviera sun, while posters and press advertisements and newspaper write-ups proclaimed simultaneously to the super-civilized world that a brand-new pleasure awaited it.

"Roulette without Zero!" was the catch-line; in smaller type it was explained that for three spins in every hour the bank's claim on zero would be waived. During those three spins the punters would be on absolutely equal terms with the bank. Nowhere else in Europe, the advertisements pointed out, did the punter have such a splendid chance of fortune-making.

On the bridge of the *Fortuna* stood Hallard and his wife, Ohlmann and the navigating and engineer officers, who would leave the vessel now that they had brought it securely to anchor and there was no further call for their services. Only Captain McIntyre, late of the steam-yacht *Ariadne* and an old acquaintance of Hallard's, would remain on board. The purser's and chief steward's departments were filled by Ohlmann's subordinates. Captain McIntyre, Hallard, Renie and Ohlmann had their quarters on the bridge-deck.

IT WAS ten o'clock in the morning. Six smart motor-launches lay out on the mill-pond waters around the *Fortuna*.

"Let her rip, Captain!" said John Hallard gaily.

The Captain gave a signal to a bugler; the bugler blared out a triumphant call; and the six motor-launches shot out fanwise for the six pleasure-resorts of the coast-line. The great game had begun.

Around them was a scene such as all Europe can scarcely rival. They lay in a half-lake of translucent lapis-lazuli. It laved the feet of a semicircle of hills garbed in dark pastel pine and silvery olive, with here and there a solitary Noah's-ark cypress standing sentinel. The slopes were dotted with the little white Noah's-ark houses of the olive-farmers, and back behind the slopes peered the rugged peaks and cliffs of the snow-capped Apennines.

There to the south lay Rapallo, cozy in its nest of hills; there to the northwest lay Portofino, snuggling into its tiny bay; there to the southeast lay Sestri Levante, ablaze

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with sunlight. Santa Margherita, Zoagli, Chiavari—they all smiled welcome to the ship of fortune lazing at anchor before them.

Through marine-glasses the party on the bridge watched eagerly the transit of the launches. What human cargo would they bring back? was the question on every one's lips.

"Those ads ought to fetch them," murmured Ohlmann, his habitual smile for once in a way clouded over by a strain of anxiety.

"They will!" retorted Hallard, with cheerful confidence.

And he was right. The launches came back laden with passengers—some merely curious to see over the ship, but the most of them eager to woo the goddess of fortune.

Soon the croupiers were busy raking in and paying out over the green tables. At the end of the first day, when midnight sounded a halt to the click of the roulette balls, the success of the scheme was assured. Ohlmann bubbled over with smiles.

On the following day the launches were busier still. Hallard and his wife were watching from the bridge a stream of passengers ascending the companion ladder, when suddenly Renie clutched his arm.

"Ratislaw!" she whispered.

Hallard looked where she indicated, and at the same moment the man in question raised his eyes and recognized them. It was Count Ratislaw, the silky Austrian they had bluffed out of a diamond necklace on board the *Ariadne* off Constantinople. The Count raised his hat with a silky smile of greeting.

"——!" muttered Hallard under his breath.

The Austrian had sworn to get even with him some day, and who could tell what spoke he might not thrust into their wheel.

"Suppose we refuse him admittance?" whispered Renie to her husband.

"What good would that do?"

However, he called up the gaming-room detective over the 'phone and ordered him to keep a careful watch on the Count's movements.

The silky Austrian did not stay long on board. After making a tour of the ship and staking a few louis on the tables, he left for Rapallo and betook himself to the telegraph office.

THE very next day the Italian Government seemed to wake up to the situation.

Italy makes a very handsome income out of the public lottery, which is a form of gambling where the bank has a clear rake-off of ten per cent. Here was a rival sitting at its doorstep and grossly undercutting its terms. A highly annoying situation.

A local official with a wealth of gold lace, a cock's plumage in his hat, a sword and a fiercely upturned mustache came out to the *Fortuna*. Hallard and Ohlmann received him at the gangway with perfect politeness; showed him the ship's papers made out in the nationality of Venezuela; pointed out the clear four miles from shore that kept them outside Italian jurisdiction, and offered him a drink and a smoke. He left visibly crestfallen.

Then the Italian officials began a pin-prick policy of hindrance. As each launch came to shore the local customs officers began a deliberately leisured search for contraband. As each passenger stepped on the wharf, he or she was cross-examined for dutiable articles. Minute little fines of a penny or a halfpenny were levied with cumbrous formality on a cigar or a scented handkerchief.

On the other hand, the hotel-keepers and tradesmen of the Ligurian Riviera welcomed the *Fortuna* with open arms. The gambling palace seemed likely to bring them visitors in shoals, and soon they began to protest in vigorous fashion against the petty maliciousness of the customs officials.

Count Ratislaw, strolling on the quayside at Rapallo, watched one of these heated altercations between hotel managers and officials with a frown of annoyance. Clearly the *Fortuna* scheme would sail triumphantly to victory unless something drastic were done.

IV

A WEEK of steadily increasing success had passed. The ship's routine had settled down and money was flowing into the coffers, over which Ohlmann kept jealous guard.

It was two o'clock at night. Gamblers had departed for shore or were asleep in the cabins below. Tired croupiers and stewards were at rest; the ship's crew were in

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the forecastle; only Captain McIntyre on the bridge and a seaman on the prow kept watch over the *Fortuna*.

The weather was on the change, and a thick veil of clouds hid the starlight. A rising wind droned a monotone of sound in the rigging, and low waves slapped now and again against the ship's plates in impotent petulance.

Out of the black darkness to the west a motor-boat purred its way toward the riding-lights of the *Fortuna*. A cable's-length away it stopped, and a tiny dingey put off from it with one man aboard. He made silently to underneath the stern of the liner, fastened up to a rudder-chain, and climbed aboard by a rope hanging carelessly over the side.

He was a tall man with a mask completely covering his face. Under his cloak he held something that bulged outward menacingly. He seemed to know the bearings of the ship, and made without hesitation, though with extreme caution, toward the bridge.

Captain McIntyre, pacing slowly from side to side in a mechanical turn-and-turn-about, heard a noise of footsteps on the bridge ladder, and turned bruskly to meet a leveled revolver.

"Keep quiet, or I shoot!" whispered a voice full of menace, speaking in French.

The Captain was a brave man, but he was helpless in face of this utterly unexpected attack.

"One cry, and you are a dead man!" whispered the masked figure again.

With curt gestures he ordered the Captain to precede him to the quarters on the bridge, and then to knock at the door of Ohlmann's suite. Louis Ohlmann came to the door in his pajamas, his eyes blinking at the sudden awakening, and the glittering revolver was turned upon him.

"Keep quiet, or I shoot!" was the menacing whisper of the unknown.

He ordered the two men into the salon of the suite and closed the door.

"Give me the keys of the safe!" he ordered with brutal curtness.

"I won't give them up!" answered Ohlmann, dead white with fear.

"You won't?"

AT. THIS moment the cabin door was wrenched open, and John Hallard, with a revolver in his hand, cut into the situation.

"Hands up!" he ordered of the masked man.

The latter backed to a corner of the room, where he could command all three, but he did not put up his hands. Instead he rained a volley of low-whispered French at them:

"Don't threaten me! Outside is my motor-boat with a Whitehead torpedo on board trained on your vessel! My men's orders are to loose the torpedo the instant they hear a shot fired. If you fire, or I fire, that will be the signal to blow the *Fortuna* sky-high. Do you understand? This is no child's play—this is earnest!"

"Who are you? What do you want?" demanded Hallard.

"I want the keys of the safe. I want fifty thousand louis as our price!"

"Who are you?" repeated Hallard. "In the pay of the Italian Government?"

The masked man gave a snarling laugh of derision, but did not answer.

"By heaven, I've got it! You're from Monte Carlo!"

Ohlmann collapsed on to a chair.

"From Monte Carlo!" he gasped.

"We don't allow rivals for nothing," sneered the unknown. "Fifty thousand is our price, and not a sou less."

"That —— Count Ratislaw!" muttered Hallard, biting his lip. "He's put them up to it."

"Ratislaw?" repeated Captain McIntyre. "The man who was on the *Ariadne* two seasons ago?"

"Yes, that's the man. He's got a grudge against us."

"Hand over the keys, or we blow you to perdition!" ordered the masked man.

Into the cabin rushed Renie, her face blanched with terror, and clutched at her husband's arm.

"What's the matter? Who is this man?"

"Some scoundrel from the Monte Carlo Government. It's a hold-up," answered Hallard curtly, and then he turned to Captain McIntyre. "Captain, the safety of this ship is in your hands. What are we to do? I leave the decision with you."

Ohlmann lay collapsed on his chair, his jaws working feebly, his fingers quivering like tentacles.

Captain McIntyre looked around him like a brave man at bay.

"For myself I don't care, but there are

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women aboard and asleep below. Let him have his money and go."

From the locked safe they took out notes and gold, and the masked man picked fifty thousand louis in notes which bore signs of usage. The new notes he put aside contemptuously, and his meaning was obvious. The new notes would be the bank's capital, and might perhaps be traced by their numbers; but the used notes would have passed over the roulette tables and their numbers would not be known.

"Remember," he said as he left the bridge, "a revolver shot at me would be the signal for the torpedo."

Helpless, they let him slip overboard into the dingey and row toward his motor-launch. Then they heard the *putt-putt* of the starting engines, and a vague shape flitted swiftly toward the west in the darkness of the night.

FIRST thing in the morning, Hallard, Renie and Ohlmann went ashore to Rapallo.

"I stick by the *Fortuna*," Hallard had said, "but I'll not have Renie on board while these kind of hold-ups are possible."

Renie's luggage was with them in the launch.

Ohlmann was full of bitter and futile threats against the masked robber.

"I'll have every note traced back to the men and women who paid them in! I'll bring an action against the Monaco Government! I'll have justice on them if it costs me another fifty thousand!"

On the quayside a ragged urchin selling newspapers thrust a *Corriere della Sera* into Hallard's hands. The scare-head on the front page caught his eye, and he opened out the paper eagerly. He read:

DRASTIC ACTION AGAINST VENEZUELA

EUROPEAN POWERS UNITE TO FORCE PAYMENT OF ARREARS IN DEBT. ITALIAN, BRITISH AND GERMAN WAR-SHIPS BLOCKADE PORT OF LA GUAYRA.

Ohlmann groaned.

"Troubles never come singly. The *Fortuna's* days are numbered."

Hallard nodded gloomily.

"My scheme was too good to be true," he said. "Well, it was a gay time while it lasted!"

But his thoughts were away in the Isle of Corsica, where Laroche, having dropped his Corsican fisherman helpers and his mask, was carefully caching the fifty thousand louis in notes against the time when they might be safely passed into currency.

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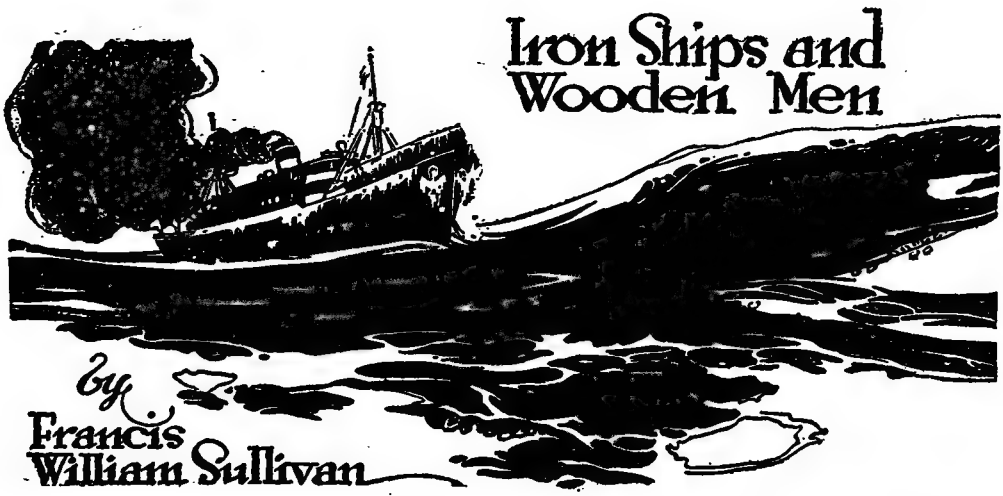

Iron Ships and Wooden Men

by Francis William Sullivan

CAPTAIN BEECHER and I had sat all that afternoon in the bay window of the Master Mariner's Club growling about the weather and wishing for some excitement to turn up. I had just taken out my second mate's papers and felt rather proud of the old skipper's attention.

We indolently watched two men struggling through the blast toward the club. Captain Beecher sat up suddenly.

"That's Duncan Mellor, as I live!" he cried, scrutinizing one of them closely. "But who is the stocky man with him? Do you know, Paul?"

I did not, although I tried to imagine.

"I wonder if Mellor is just as crazy about queer sea characters as he used to be," went on Beecher as the newcomers disappeared into the door beneath. "Why, there was a time when he couldn't come in here without smelling of brine and tar and bringing some old mackerel with him to spin a yarn for us."

"Here's hoping he has," I said, and quoted:

> "What a day for deep-sea lore
> If it's only learned ashore."

Mellor had evidently seen us through the window, for he came directly to Beecher and they renewed old times together.

"Beecher, shake hands with Captain Trevor of the *Australia*," said Mellor, and I involuntarily stepped closer to view this man who is the skipper of the biggest and fastest ocean liner in the world. Then I was introduced and, after ordering fresh cigars, we all sat down near the fire in the early Winter twilight.

The talk drifted back and forth like the smoke in the warm air, and, as it was ever on nautical matters, we manipulated skilfully to draw Trevor out. Since Mellor had brought him, then, necessarily, he must have a story to tell.

"A skipper said to me the other day," rumbled Mellor conversationally after a while as he mussed his beard with his hand, "that there used to be wooden ships and iron men, but that now there are iron ships and wooden men. I thought that rather clever and——"

He stopped abruptly and offered the grizzled old sea dog a match. Trevor had unbuttoned his coat and vest and squared himself. Only Mellor knew the signs.

Presently Trevor sucked briskly at his weed, crossed his stocky legs, glanced sharply at us from his keen blue eyes, and told us the tale of an iron ship and—a man:

SOME of you remember, no doubt, that Winter of ten years ago when the battered hulks of fifty vessels strewed the coast from Portland to the Carolinas and nearly every liner from the other side brought in a rescued crew. Yes? Then you can't have forgotten the twenty-seventh of January when the *Andalusia*, with the blackened face of Captain Harvey Wilson peering from the bridge, staggered into port, solid ice from foot to foremast head, and ten days overdue.

Limping, wallowing, diving, with a dizzy

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list to starboard, she showed her teeth to the light-ship like a drunken hag leering at a policeman. And her half-starved, white-faced passengers stared out of shattered ports and across chopped decks weeping like children. The man who wrote the Doxology should have heard it sung that day!

That was my first trip as second officer on a passenger-carrier, and may you never have one like it, young man. The *Andalusia* was then what the *Australia* is now—the Queen of the seas. She was the first single-screw vessel to make the passage from Queenstown in less than eight days.

You remember all that? Good. No doubt you read the published accounts of that trip. But you never heard the real yarn, and you wouldn't now if Harvey Wilson wasn't lying at the bottom of the sea with the *Prince George*, and Martin Duffy wasn't sweeping crossings in Liverpool because of whisky.

It all began, Mellor, with that remark you just made about iron ships and wooden men. That's not new. It is ten years old, and was originated by Martin Duffy, first mate of the *Andalusia*. We were four days out from Queenstown, having cleared on January tenth, and he and I were at dinner with the staff.

He was a strange man, was Duffy, fifty-five years old, with white hair and mustache, and a perky, officious way. He gave orders to the crew like the skipper of a hell-ship, and I never saw him crossed but once. Duffy was, in fact, a type of the old school—a foremast hand risen to a mate's berth by force of will and determination. He thought he should be a captain because of his age, and the fact that he wasn't embittered his life.

"They used to have wooden ships and iron men, but now they have iron ships and wooden men," said Duffy, loud enough for everybody at the table to hear.

Captain Wilson had just risen from his seat and was passing along opposite when Duffy made the remark. He hesitated a moment, looked sharply at the mate, and then continued on.

"What do you mean by such a statement?" I asked.

"Just this," snapped Duffy. "There was a time when sailor men learned their business from the sea; when they shipped under a skipper who knocked navigation into their heads with a belaying-pin if his fists weren't heavy enough. *Those* skippers could get their latitude with a rag tied around a notched stick if their sextant went by the board. But look at 'em now!" His jaw squared truculently. "They take 'em out of Eton and Harrow, put 'em on a training-ship with mahogany cabin-fittings, and have a Latin schoolmaster learn 'em how to shorten sail. Their mamas kiss 'em good-by at the jetty and their weeping sisters put flowers on their desks. And then this Line shoots the darlings into second mate's berths, and in five years they're skippers just as if they'd earned it!"

There was no more doubting either Duffy's grievance or his allusion.

"Meaning whom?" I asked bluntly.

"Captain Harvey Wilson," replied the mate without a moment's hesitation. "This young cub here hasn't any business on the *Andalusia*. Just as I tell you, she's an iron ship with a wooden commander."

I thought over Duffy's arraignment of the skipper. True, he was young—thirty-nine or thereabouts—and he had graduated from a training-ship instead of the hard school of the "old masters." But I never had put him down as a weakling. He was of good height, clean-shaven, and had a head of hair like a musician. His dark brown eyes were keen and sharp; they seemed to search you for meanings like an X-ray goes after a button you've swallowed. He was gentle of manner and speech. In fact, he was, in every way, the more refined product of the modern school.

Of course Duffy was in the wrong. He had no business referring to his commander in disrespectful terms, but it wasn't until later that we found out about the whisky, which, as I see it now, was responsible for most everything with him.

LWE HAD been having a rough passage. Head winds and head seas varied with cross-seas that pounded the *Andalusia* like the hammers of hell and swung her reeling off her course. But she came back to it bravely every time, shaking her head like a thoroughbred horse. Oh, she was a splendid ship when that voyage began!

There were two thousand people aboard her. Fifty were in the saloon. They were people of quality as I remember it—the usual persons of wealth and refinement who go to make up a midwinter saloon company.

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In the second cabin were about a hundred and fifty good, self-respecting citizens and the rest were below decks in the steerage. And, thank Heaven, this steerage was mostly from the British Isles.

As I said, we cleared Queenstown the tenth of January. On the fifteenth the mercury in the barometer plumped to the bottom of the glass and stayed there. The blow came from the northeast and caught us about four hundred miles east a little south of Halifax, Nova Scotia. The sea was bad —big and icy-foamed and deadly, with hollows between that gave plenty of air for the screw to race in when the *Andalusia's* head was down—which was a third of the time. Half speed was good speed then.

That lasted for a day. Along about five o'clock in the afternoon of the sixteenth the Devil took a hand and sat into the game against Harvey Wilson, with two thousand human souls as the stake. Duffy was on the bridge at the time.

All at once there was a fearful jarring and ripping and cracking. The screw, which was drying off in the wind, seemed to thrash and kick like a mule in a pine shanty, and for a quarter of a minute I thought it would rip the bottom out of her. The engine-room sounded like a boiler-factory. Suddenly the racket stopped and I shot out of my berth against the table on the other side of the room as the old *Andalusia*, with her headway gone, rolled down in a sickening plunge until the wave-tops clipped at her starboard life-boats.

Harvey Wilson was on the bridge in his shirt-sleeves when I staggered up the ladder. He was talking to MacDonald in the engine-room and he cursed like a madman when he heard the report.

"Propellor shaft broken at the thrust-block!" he yelled above the howl of the wind. "Repairs will take at least three days! Send up a steward with the rest of my clothes!"

Then he gave orders like the reports of a rifle, and the deck force was jumping from hatches to davits and winches as though they felt the rope's-end round their ribs as in the old days. Soon she was as tight as a drum with everything double-lashed and battened.

That happened in latitude forty-two degrees fifty-one minutes and seventeen seconds, and longitude fifty-nine degrees and one minute, which figures I'll never forget.

And all that night we plunged and rolled like an empty water-barrel, making sternway in the general direction of land—for the *Andalusia's* head had swung round—and taking the sloshing wave-tops down our ventilators. But the old ship and Harvey Wilson threw them off doggedly.

We doubled the lookouts, for it was now imperative that a steamer be sighted and signaled that we might be towed to port. All during that first night we sent up rockets and peered into the storm with night-glasses, hoping to catch an answering flash. But none came, and every moment carried us farther out of the steamship lane, with the chances of being sighted becoming steadily less.

Occasionally we were deluded by false hopes. Several times faint smudges on the far-off steamer track roused our dying hopes and we signaled frantically. But we knew in our hearts that no vessel could see us at that distance.

Once a French bark loomed past us, with what sails she had set cracking aloft, and we gazed enviously at the stocking-capped little man who gibbered and gesticulated at us across a mile of dark water. And on the third day a four-masted schooner, hull half-down, thrashed by to starboard, bound, no doubt, for Boston or Gloucester.

Our general drift was almost directly south, for we were not close enough to land to feel the northerly sweep of the Gulf Stream. Nor were we far enough north to encounter the easterly trend of what is known as the Gulf Stream drift, a movement formed by the north-moving Gulf Stream and the south-moving Labrador current. On the contrary, we were constantly urged south by the procession of waves that marched before the wind in that direction. Day by day it was not much, forty or fifty miles, perhaps, but in the end it totaled up amazingly.

SUCH a time wears on the nerves of the best-tried men, and it was during those dark days of aimless drifting that Duffy and Wilson came again into conflict. We three had met in the lee of the wheelhouse quite by accident; and when I saw Duffy I noticed a queer look in the old fellow's eye. The cold and strain were a good deal for a man of his age, and I guess he had heartened himself a bit.

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"I'd give my commission and my papers and everything I own in this world if we could only get a tow," said Wilson with a hunted look on his pale face. "These passengers *must* be got ashore!"

"And think of the mails and the gold," I supplemented.

Wilson's face clouded still more, for in our post-office hung fifteen hundred bags of delayed Christmas mail, and in our bullion room lay five millions in gold, non-interest bearing while at sea.

"Humph!" snorted Duffy with just a tinge of contempt, "I don't believe much in being towed."

He cocked his head on one side and wet his lips judicially as he spoke.

"Why not?" demanded the Captain.

"Well, sir," he replied, "as a man of forty years' experience, it doesn't look to me like it was really necessary. I've known skippers with the experience to ride out worse blows than this in much worse ships. There's an awful lot in having a feeling of confidence in oneself and one's boat, and in knowing just how to handle a situation."

"Yes, man," burst out Wilson, apparently indifferent to the implied insult, "but think of the passengers and the mail and the money. This isn't any lousy bark with a bellyful of hemp and tea. This is a steamship, and my first duty is to save my passengers. I only wish to God I could!"

He took a turn or two along the deck.

"I hardly suppose, sir," said Duffy, his attitude still within the bounds of respect and deference, "that the Line would care to whack up a couple of hundred thousand salvage unless it was absolutely necessary. Saving the money, not spending it, is the idea according to my thinking. I——"

"I don't care a tinker's tink what the Line would or would not care to do," snapped Wilson with asperity, his eyes beginning to gleam, "but I know what my duty as Captain of this ship is, and if it cost two million to get the passengers safely out of it, and I could do it, I would."

"I've known skippers, sir," went on Duffy unwisely, "who have been in the the service of their Line long enough to feel that the owners expect them to bring in their ship without salvage. The old Captains——"

"The iron men, eh, Duffy?" snarled Wilson with flashing eyes and curling lips.

"Yes, sir, the iron men."

The Captain stopped short.

"If we can ever get those engines to turn over," he flamed, "we'll make a port, alone if we have to, but with a tow if we can get it."

Then he turned on his heel and walked away.

Our drift had now carried us to a point that made Boston our nearest port, and Wilson expressed a hope that we would fall in with a vessel bound thence. But we were sadly out of any regular trade lane and we only sighted an occasional smoke-smudge in the distance.

We were in a bad way then. A wave crashed through the wheelhouse windows and, catching one of the wheelmen, drove him backward through the partition into the chart-room, flooding that and ruining its contents. Another caught the old *Andalusia* under the rump and twisted her sidewise until her bolts cracked and her plates sprung. Then the compartments were closed and the pumps started.

Harvey Wilson climbed to the bridge and stayed there, only coming down occasionally for a bite to eat and three hours' sleep at night. But he never lost his temper again. When he talked to the engine-room it wasn't to curse or revile. He knew those poor devils were working to save their own souls and he encouraged them. Well he might. Did you ever follow a propeller-shaft from the eccentric to the tail? It's dark and cramped and narrow and cold where that runs. And those grimy chaps, with MacDonald leading, spent the better part of three days hacking cold steel with chisels and hand drills, gouging out four key-ways, and trying to fix into them steel bolts five inches thick.

Twice they patched her up and turned over the engines, and twice we hadn't gone a mile before she rattled and shook herself loose again. But MacDonald and his crew went back undaunted.

AT LAST, on the morning of the fourth day, we made a final start, with Wilson grinning on the bridge, Duffy swaying in his cabin, and a brand-new British flag, run up for the occasion, snapping aloft. It was a brave get-away, and there was a jauntiness about it that was truly inspiring. Wilson, with his head high and his rare, brilliant smile once more in evidence, made his way through the

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crowds of passengers telling them we were bound for New York.

Fortunately the wind did not die, though the sea fell considerably, so that the bare five knots that the *Andalusia* was able to kick out alone was increased to nearly seven. But that was no speed for her. She was accustomed to romp across the long course at twenty knots and the short at twenty-one and a half, and she was provisioned accordingly. So we were none of us surprised when Tomkins, the Chief Steward, came to Wilson's cabin one morning and said:

"Captain, we're running 'way behind on our grub, and I doubt if we can hold out another eight days even on reduced rations. The steerage will soon be in a bad way, sir."

"Cut all food one-third," replied Wilson promptly, "and if the steerage is up against it, give them food from the cabin. Treat every one alike."

"Yes, sir."

I can never think of Harvey Wilson without thinking of grayness—hard, grim, dull grayness—and of the two days thereafter we spent careering drunkenly through a chill gray world. And hour after hour upon the bridge, dominating the gray, salt-smeared ship, stood a stolid figure in a heavy gray ulster out of which peered a wan, gray face—Have you another light there, Duncan?

So we came on the evening of the twentieth to a point within striking distance of port.

Suddenly the still, dead clouds above us began to move, and as I stood watching them they commenced whirling and pirouetting and leaping over one another until, coming out of my dazed trance, I saw that it was the ship dancing and flinging and that we were in the grip of another storm which the clouds had emptied on us when they first began to move. And it was a fearful storm, this new blast that thundered across the gray sea at us on a path flattened by its advance puffs!

When it hit the ship she just turned away her head for a minute to get breath and then plowed in. MacDonald stood over the break in the propeller-shaft with a wrench in each hand, watching her turn over, alternately cursing and nursing her according to her need. And Harvey Wilson on the bridge ripped out the port engine telegraph with twenty yards of wire in his hand when the wind first struck, for it blew him across the bridge against the opposite railing like a piece of paper against a picket fence.

The most I can remember about those hours is the *Andalusia* clanking out her soul, and Harvey Wilson up above there holding her to it, indomitable, persistent, and with the tenacity of a barnacle. Soon he came to personify for me all that is immovable, immutable, fixed; all that is courage, force, and will.

Dawn brought no respite, but it showed in the offing the *Gloria* of the same Line with her flags hoisted, and, far ahead, pitching like a cork because she was light, a long, high stranger with one funnel set far back. The *Gloria* hove to and Wilson signaled:

"Am disabled; stand by."

To this the *Gloria* replied:

"Can not stand by; carrying mails."

So were we carrying mails, but Wilson didn't palaver, and the *Gloria* passed on. And that noon along came the *Herschel* from Copenhagen with three thousand steerage.

"Am disabled; stand by," said the flags again, and fifteen minutes later we made out:

"Can not stand by; coal nearly gone."

Ducking into a smother that flecked her mast-head, she followed the *Gloria* toward safety and harbor and home. Our coal was short, too, but Wilson didn't answer back. He let 'em go without a word, but God knows what was in his heart!

Two hours later we came abreast of the long, high, stranger that was kicking her heels into the clouds and spouting foam from all sides. She seemed to make very hard going of it.

"*Waldteufel*," Wilson made out with his glasses, and he kept repeating the name to himself reminiscently. Finally a dull light of recollection came into his tired face.

"By Jove! I know her now!" he exclaimed. "She's the finest oil boat in the trade, and old Bergman, her master, is the stingiest skipper in two hemispheres. How he ever got the *Waldteufel* I don't know. But look at him, Trevor; what's he saying?"

The ensign of the big oiler suddenly climbed the halliards wrong side up. A moment later a string of gayly colored flags broke out aloft.

"Engine trouble; laying to for repairs;

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can you stand by?" I translated from the International Code book.

"No," Wilson replied.

"Can you send us a line?" queried the German.

Wilson's cracked face did not change when I read him the message, except that his lips became almost imperceptibly tighter and his eyes harder. Could we do it? Hadn't we trouble enough now without mothering and fathering a thrashing German oil steamer?

"Give it to 'em, I guess they need it," he said, "and, by God, we'll haul 'em to port with us!"

So we passed the line and lost two sailors overboard when we reversed and dropped back to make fast.

THERE have been men, in my hearing, who have criticized Harvey Wilson for this action, saying they would have gone by and let old Bergman work in as best he could. It's all a case of the man and the need. Every year Captains risk their lives and their reputations giving aid to those in misery on the sea. It is the first law of nautical humanity. And yet, on the other hand, reports come in every Winter of abandonments under terrible stress.

As I say, much lies in the man—and this man being Harvey Wilson he did as I feared—recognized the higher law. Himself abandoned, betrayed and passed by, he gave aid where he could. But let this also be said, that had the case of the *Andalusia* not in his opinion warranted the action he took, he would not have raised a finger though a ship foundered less than a cable's length away.

And now the *Andalusia* could scarcely hold her own. We officers were fairly done up and the ship was going to pieces under our feet. Inside of half an hour she lived a hundred lives; and yet she could not die with that man on her bridge. A wave smashed every starboard port-hole and window forward of the first funnel on the promenade deck and plundered the staterooms and passageways, driving the passengers, shivering but quiet, to safer quarters through water up to their knees.

In the second cabin the piano had been uprooted in the saloon, and was busy demolishing the riveted tables and chairs.

And the steerage! God, what a shambles! We buried ten from there, and weighted them with iron because the coal was too precious, and heaved them overboard, thinking they were better off than we.

Dr. Stacey, now on the *Australia*, was with us then, and for three days he didn't get a wink of sleep. Afterward he was made a Fellow of the Royal Society for three difficult operations he performed with only stewards as helpers.

But the old ship lived. She sagged and buckled and cracked, drew like a coal-barge, but she lived!

What was the feeling of the officers, you ask? It's hard to say, young man, but I know we weren't frightened; only in despair. But I remember that, despite that we made a pool on how long it would be before we went to the bottom.

But Wilson was of different stuff. He said he would make port, and you couldn't help but believe him when he said it. And he kept repeating it to every one. He went down into the reeling hell where the stokers worked and told them. He went to the engine-room, shook hands all round, and told them. He went into the steerage where they had lost their ten dead, and when he told them they cheered him, and were the first to believe.

Confident, cheerful, enduring, he led us on to that higher hope and faith that only comes to human beings when their instinctive religion is set face to face with the big elemental facts of life and death.

Only Duffy had had enough. Staunch and shaking by turns, he went white-lipped and exhausted about his duties. In him, despair was the lack of the thing that had supported him secretly for so long; hope the indulgence in it. And this Wilson learned. He caught the old man drinking heavily while on duty, and stood and watched while the perspiration gathered on the pallid forehead and the bottle wavered in the shaking hand.

"Is that what iron men are made of?" he asked calmly, and turned away, while Duffy, with a cry, heaved the bottle over the side.

It was his last one, too, and there was no more liquor on the ship that he could get at, for the stuff had been in heavy demand. I foresaw the added horror of this fact.

Finally the wind changed and again veered to the northeast, driving us toward land. But the seas were still fearful, nor

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could the brave old *Andalusia* fling them off as she had once done. She went through them rather than over them, and the terrible weight of the *Waldteufel* behind dragged her down cruelly.

Inside we lashed the women to riveted chairs and set the men at work upon hand-pumps, for the water had begun to get in.

How long would the engines last? That was the question that kept us all grim and worried. We knew if they stopped again that—well, we always changed the subject when we reached that point.

But hour followed hour and still they throbbed, slowly, measuredly, rhythmically, like the phrases of a great poem; like the majestic numbers of a mighty epic of victory over the sea.

So we came to gain slowly in our misery toward port again, and again we were in a world of gray. The *Andalusia* had now begun to list to starboard, because of the water in her compartments, and she struggled soddenly along like a duck with a broken wing, salt-streaked and disreputable. The real cold had not yet come.

ONE clear noon I made out our position as slightly south of New York in the path of the coastwise trade. We were still hauling the disgruntled oiler, when Duffy and I happened to meet in the Captain's cabin while the latter was there.

This time I think Duffy was mad. For two days he had had nothing to drink, nor could he succeed in drawing on the ship's stores as he had tried to do. He was frantic. His white whiskers were dirty and unkempt, his uniform awry, he looked as though he hadn't slept, and he was shaking all over like a man with a chill. In his eyes was a wild look of agony, not physical agony, but an agony of the nerves that you can't appreciate unless you have seen it. He greeted Wilson scarcely at all, but after a few moments' absent thought he cried, barely controlling his eagerness:

"You're going to pick up a tow here, aren't you, Captain? We should catch one any hour and speed's the thing."

"We're going to make New York on our own steam, Mr. Duffy," replied Wilson.

"But you're eight days overdue now," he protested eagerly, "and the Line and the people on shore will be wild to hear from you. It's only right."

"We will make New York without help, Mr. Duffy. I know my ship," said Wilson quietly.

"But think of the mails that are late and the gold below that must reach port at once. And the passengers——"

He broke off suddenly to wet his quivering lips again, and stood locking and unlocking his hands nervously while he watched Wilson's every expression.

"I've known skippers with the proper mate," said Wilson, unmoved and inexorable, "to ride out worse blows than this in much worse ships."

"Yes, sir, yes, sir," said Duffy feverishly, "but this isn't a merchantman that can loaf into port at any time. She's got to make it quick."

Suddenly he threw himself on his knees before the Captain and lifted his poor wreck of a face down which the tears were streaming.

"Oh, for God's sake, Captain Wilson," he cried, "take me in quick or I shall go crazy. I never meant a word of what I said about you—I was wrong, I was a fool, I was jealous. I see it now, but I can't live this way. Oh, God, sir, for one drink of whisky! I'd sell my soul for it! Name your price and I will spend my life paying you back! Transfer me to another vessel where I can get it."

"This ship is bound for New York and you will finish the voyage as her mate," said Wilson. "As for iron ships and wooden men——"

With the cry of a maniac Duffy leaped to his feet, drawing his revolver as he did so.

"Give me that bottle in your locker!" he had time to cry before I closed with him from behind. He had evidently forgotten me.

It was a grim battle. Two weak and spectral men wrestling feebly on the floor for the possession of a weapon that could have ended half a dozen of our lives with one shot. But Duffy was frenziedly strong and managed to pull the trigger twice in the general direction of Wilson without hitting him. Then I had his wrist grinding under my knee and he was helpless. Together we threw him into his cabin and locked the door, telling a steward to watch it and attend to all his wants—except one.

We had scarcely disposed of Duffy when Tomkins, the chief steward, knocked.

"I'm sorry, sir," he said, "but provisions

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are gone. We may last a day longer on bread and water, but after that there is nothing."

"Signal the *Waldteufel* for provisions."

"I beg pardon, sir," I interrupted, "but they signaled us yesterday that theirs were entirely gone and could we spare them some? I said no."

"Well, Bergman's stinginess be upon his own head this time," said Wilson. "Tomkins, I place matters entirely in your hands. Upon you rests the responsibility of making things go as far as they can."

Wilson's brow clouded as the chief left the room.

"Trevor," he said quietly to me, "everything is against us, it seems. But we'll make it—we'll make it just as sure as there's a God in heaven. They can not keep me away now, they can't. I defy the Devil and all his angels to do it."

He wasn't blaring or blowing. He said it as confidently and as calmly as I'm saying it now. That idea was his creed and his religion.

There was another knock at the door.

"The coals are about done, sir," said bushy-faced MacDonald. "With good judgment they might last six hours longer."

"The devil has answered your defy, Captain," said I.

"Signal to Bergman for coal," ordered Wilson, his mouth tightening and his brows drawing down. "He ought to spare some; his engines have been dead long enough."

I stepped outside to obey the order and stood rooted and open-mouthed at the sight that met my eyes. Bouncing over the waves toward us, with black smoke belching from her stack, came the *Waldteufel*—and without a towing-line hanging from her bow!

Hurrying aft I ordered the hawser hauled in. It had been neatly chopped as though they were in great haste. At the intelligence Wilson rushed on deck.

"Need coal badly," fluttered the little signal flags from our truck. "Stand by to transfer."

For a long time there was no reply. We sogged and sagged along better now that we were rid of our burden, but the German drew steadily away. Would he never answer? Wilson blew the whistle angrily. Finally from her yard this signal broke:

"Had little ourselves, so took tow. Barely make port now."

FOR the first time there came into Harvey Wilson's face a look of infinite despair. He suddenly stood there strangely alone, the master of a foodless, fireless, lightless hulk, little better than a wallowing derelict—and there were two thousand human souls that looked to him for the very courage to exist. This villainy of Bergman's had almost broken his heart.

None of us said anything as we waited, for the soul of such a man fares better alone in its desolate solitude. And for five minutes he stood silent on the groaning deck, while the old *Andalusia* thumped and banged through the water with the last throbs of her faithful heart. I remember the icy spray rattling like buckshot on the boat-deck above.

At last the change came into his face. He had drunk the bitter draught of loneliness, disappointment and seeming failure, and it had failed to extinguish the flame of his indomitable spirit!

"All hands turn to and chop up the ship to feed the fires!"

We turned to with a yell and began on the boat-deck just as the third gale set in with terrible cold. A wave during the second storm had swept away five life-boats on the port side and smashed the other. Three on the starboard side were useless, so we knocked them all into kindling wood. That left three boats and four life-rafts for nearly two thousand people. We spared those only because of the women and children. Next came the rail, the chairs, and everything that, if chopped, wouldn't let water into the ship. A force below had already begun on the furniture.

It was nightmare after that.

Cold, bitter cold—such cold as burns in freezing—settled down that night and bound us hand and foot, stem and stern, waterline and truck. Spray froze instantly upon our oilskins only to be cracked and broken off with stiff, raw hands. Steam was low, for our fuel was low, and there was none wasted in the heating of the ship; it all went into the cylinders. The women and children were perishing with the terrible cold and all we could give them was hot water and hard bread. Still we kept on.

And the *Andalusia!* She had no more resilience to her than a piece of lead. Every time she went down she stayed so long I thought she'd founder, and I didn't really

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care one way or the other. But she didn't. She responded somehow or other, as all of us had done, to the wonderful power and domination of Harvey Wilson, and let him lead her in, a half-crazy skipper on a crazy, ghostly ice-shrouded Flying Dutchman.

Finally off Navesink beach we saw the last of the *Waldteufel*. She was piled up on the sand, crumpled and broken, for Bergman had steamed too close in his endeavor to economize coal. They say the bodies of his crew, emaciated from starvation, rolled ashore the next day.

We dipped our colors as we passed the hulk.

THAT'S about all the story.

After we had docked, Duffy was taken to Bellevue, "suffering from exposure," according to the published reports. Of course he was sacked, and worked his way back to Liverpool somehow, and there he has been ever since.

They made me mate on the *Telonia*. I had been studying a long while for the examinations anyhow, so they said I might as well take them as soon as I felt fit.

And Wilson, as you know, received a dozen hero medals from as many different societies and a knighthood from the King. Also he got the new *Prince George* when she came out five years ago, and, lastly, he got his clearance papers for the long lonely voyage that all of us must make some time. And I sit here mourning his death now as I did the day I learned it.

For he was the greatest iron man who ever sailed the sea.

Iron ships and wooden men! Perhaps. But great men are the same men whether they sail in crystal glass or vanadium steel, and Harvey Wilson was one of them.

Judge Barclay's Wife

By William Hope Hodgson

The Story of a Grim Crisis and—a Woman

MRS. JUDGE BARCLAY she was called, and no one thought to call her anything else. And at the instant of this tale she sat in the crude, log-built cabin that did temporary duty for a court in the small township of Selville, which lay at the head of what was locally termed the "gold-creek."

Her husband, assisted by the Sheriff and a number of his posse, accompanied by a number of miners, was trying a young miner named Jem Turrill, and the old Judge's face showed a strong tendency to mercy, as he looked down from his raised seat of packing-cases at the sullen face of the young man before him.

On her part, Mrs. Judge Barclay was trying to catch the Judge's eye, to "stiffen his backbone," as she would have phrased it; for she had dealt with him often and bit-

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terly concerning his undue tendency to mercy. A hard-faced, big-boned, childless woman of sixty, she was vigorous and a ruler of men, her husband in particular, except on this one point which pertained to mercy. Judge Barclay, however, had once been Sheriff, and had practical knowledge that the capital sentence given in court was but the precursor of that dread scene where a rope and too often a fine man, kicking his life away, formed a dreadful conjunction in his memory. Many and many a man had he seen pass outward this way, yet with pleasure it may be told that such experiences had not brought callousness.

But Mrs. Judge Barclay knew nothing of what I might term the practical side of justice. She failed in realization. She attended constantly at the courts where her husband presided, and would listen with critical severity to her husband's handling of the case, and see no further than the given sentence. Too often she would listen with a sort of impatient half-contempt in her heart at old Judge Barclay's constant tempering of justice with good human mercy; and always after any special evidence of this trait in him she would consider it her duty to "stiffen his backbone," as she termed it—a process which occasionally included the heaping upon the Judge of some rather brusk comments, bordering almost on the contemptuous.

As a result of his wife's constant attitude, old Judge Barclay had more than once found himself dealing out sentences that were sterner than his heart considered the needs of the case to require. This wife of his strung him up, as it were, to a sort of concert-pitch of austerity. But such stringing-up was only temporary in every case, and after the court had ended, the old Judge would have a bad time with his own kindly nature, the while, perhaps, that he would be walking back to his log-hotel with his wife, nodding absently to her comments of somewhat grim approbation. Perhaps, once in a way, he would wake up to the whole meaning of the situation, with, maybe, something of a vague half-bitterness toward his wife, and a desire to show her somewhat of the things that lay actually behind the sentence—the human agony and shame and degradation of the poor human in the machinery of correction.

Once, indeed, he had made the attempt; had silenced her with a sudden sternness that had astounded her, and brought a sudden novel respect for him into her general feeling of proprietorship. But he had failed entirely, as he worked slowly and earnestly, striving to pull up for her inspection the deep roots (the principles) out of which grew the plant of his conduct in life. He had no particular gift of speech, and had striven with logic, where only the wand of emotion might have helped him, to reach down to the sunk wells of pity that lay so deep in the frozen womanhood of his grim and childless wife.

His effort merely earned the retort that "evil-doers must take their physic, or else quit their bad ways;" and further, that if he had not the "stomach for his duty," he would be better employed doing other work, "maybe nursin' babbies!" What an inverted expression of the pain of her denied motherhood lay in this tilt at the Judge! Though it is more than probable that the woman never realized it!

AND now she sat in the log-shanty court, and stared with cold eyes of complete condemnation from Jem Turrill, the prisoner, to her husband, the Judge, and so back again to the prisoner—her brain taking the evidence piece by piece, and her stern reasoning breeding in her an impatient contempt for the look of compassion which old Judge Barclay occasionally turned upon the sullen and youthful Jem.

Jem Turrill was certainly a rather sullen-looking young lout; but, for all that, he was possessed of a more wholesome heart and better abilities than a casual look at his face suggested, the poor effect he produced owing itself probably to his constant sullen expression, which put onlookers immediately out of sympathy with him. He was given to occasional heavy drinking-bouts, and he gambled inveterately; but also he worked hard, and he had a very real affection for his old mother, whose love for him had for so long been pitiful in its hungry intensity to aid and coax him to steady ways without angering him.

Her affection had brought her West, among the mining towns, that she might be near to him. She had come one evening, a few months prior to the event I am relating, and the son had welcomed her with a curious mixture of honest joy and equal-

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ly honest shamefacedness, lest the other miners of his acquaintanceship should view the matter from the point of view of the "maternal apron-strings." Yet the over-youthful Jem need not have troubled; his comrades neither thought nor cared one way or the other about the new arrival, except it might be to envy him the possession of a competent housekeeper and cook in his little, rough shanty. And, as I have said, though a wayward, sullen youth, his affection for his mother was genuine and curiously intense, after its own peculiar fashion.

But of all this Mrs. Judge Barclay was unaware. It is to be doubted whether she ever so much as realized that the youthful thief and murderer—these were the counts on which he was standing his trial—so much as possessed a mother; whether, indeed, such a dreadful creature could possibly have been born of woman! If she herself had borne children she might have understood many things, and she would not have been sitting there. As it was, she sat there, calm and logical and utterly impatient of the "sentimentality" of her husband's expression, as he viewed the sodden-looking young reprobate before the court.

And young Jem Turrill was in very sore trouble indeed, though far less a guilty-souled man than the woman or the court believed him. Indeed, by the woman and the court he was already foredoomed to condemnation; but old Judge Barclay saw a little deeper, and was striving somewhat inefficiently to elicit such replies from the prisoner as should present his case in a less dreadful light. But young Jem only stood like a clumsy oaf, protesting with sullen earnestness his innocence to the old Judge who desired to believe him, and to the court that entirely disbelieved him.

Once, in the midst of his protesting of innocence, he stopped, and looked suddenly at Mrs. Judge Barclay, the one woman in the court, as if he had an abrupt thought that she perhaps might understand that he was innocent of the worst. The action was born of a sudden, rather hopeless, instinct, that became instantly wholly hopeless as his look met her grim, unfaltering gaze, as merciless as that of any man present. And with a hopeless little half-drunken shrugging of his shoulders he had turned from her and once more faced the old Judge, whose leaning toward mercy he perceived dimly.

THE details were brief enough. He had been up at the shanty of one Duncan Larsden, playing cards during the past night. Pistol-shots a little before dawn had brought up the Sheriff and a couple of his men, who found Larsden dead, with a bullet-wound in his head. Young Jem Turrill was gone, and with him, as was shortly proved, at least two hundred ounces of Larsden's gold. The Sheriff took up the hot trail, and ran the young man down within two hours; and already he was in the court, being tried for his life. Indeed, so speedily had events moved, that his old mother at that very moment awaited him in the shanty with a newly-cooked damper and a fresh-opened tin of salmon, and all unaware of the dreadfulness that was falling.

As I have said, Jem sullenly but vehemently protested his innocence. When caught by the Sheriff, he was found to have on him a one-hundred-ounce bag of gold-dust, in addition to the nuggets of the dead man. The gold-dust he was able easily to prove as his own property; at least, it had been his on the previous evening. His version was that Larsden had lost his two hundred ounces of nuggets to him, and had then staked his claim against the three hundred ounces of gold that Jem held.

Larsden had won; but even as he declared himself winner, two aces had dropped out of his sleeve, and Jem had rounded upon him as a cheat—a swindler. At the accusation Larsden had drawn on him; but his gun had missed fire, and Jem had got home a good useful shot before the other man had time to pull trigger a second time, and Duncan Larsden had slipped out noisily into the twilight of life. Jem had then got a sick fright that the affair might look bad for him, and, like a silly young fool, had proceeded to make it immediately ten thousand times worse by bolting with the gold.

Possibly, if he had been more sober, he would have seen the folly of his action in time: but regrets were useless; he had bolted, and been found with the "stolen" gold upon him.

It is true that in young Jem's favor it was found that a miss-fire cartridge occupied one of the chambers of Larsden's revolver; but this was not exactly evidence, and against this one favorable item was the fact that the young man had gone off with

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the two hundred ounces of gold that had not been his the previous evening. This was the thing that condemned him; there was no thought of mercy on the part of the jurors; there had been far too much thieving in the township of late; it was a matter that vitally affected each and every one of them; for some had gold in their shanties or tents, and others hoped sometime to be in a like pleasing condition.

The result of such interests, dealing with such evidence, was a foregone conclusion—young Jem Turrill was sentenced to be hanged the next morning at dawn; the gallows, a tree just outside of the north end of the township; it had been used previously for the same purpose, having a convenient bough.

As Jem was led out of the shanty where the court had been held, he turned suddenly and stared fiercely at Mrs. Judge Barclay; she was, as I have said, the only woman there.

"Hey!" shouted the sullen Jem, with an extraordinary flash of analytical inspiration, "you'm a hard-hearted old brute, you be, sittin' there an' thinkin' proper to have me murdered! You old hag!"

He was hustled away, for old Mrs. Barclay was well enough liked and thoroughly respected; and the only effect of the young man's outburst was to fix the more firmly on her mind, and on the minds of all the others, that he was but a brutish creature, and better hung soon than late. Even old Judge Barclay was conscious of a momentary flash of anger against him for his address to his wife.

And so the young man went out to the little log-built lockup, where he was to fret away the hours that remained.

Meanwhile, some one told his old mother.

AT DAYBREAK next day, however, when the Sheriff visited the lockup with a number of his posse to lead young Turrill to his own grim version of "under the greenwood tree," he found the man he had left on guard comfortably ensconced within the lockup, in a state of beatific drunkenness; but Jem, the condemned but soul-guiltless murderer, was distinctly not there.

Explanations from the guard were confused, and the Sheriff twisted the key on him in turn, while he organized search-parties for Jem Turrill. The search-parties were not a success, and it seemed that Jem had got safely away; but the Sheriff was an obstinate man, and having arranged a hanging, was determined that a hanging there should be. He stuck therefore to the search, but adopted a new method: he watched the comings and goings of Jem's old mother.

Meanwhile, old Judge Barclay, having a day of rest before him, chose to go fishing, accompanied, as ever, by Mrs. Barclay. He was in a restful and contented frame of mind. He was thoroughly though secretly glad that young Jem had escaped. He felt in his heart that, whatever the evidence, the man was less guilty than proof had shown.

It was in the late afternoon, just as old Judge Barclay was having an exciting moment with an exceptionally fine fish, that both he and his wife heard a woman screaming somewhere among the trees on their side of the river. The Judge handed his rod to his wife, and ran off in the direction of the sound. Mrs. Judge Barclay consigned the rod to the river-bank and followed him.

The screams continued, and the old Judge began to run breathlessly, and his wife also, with a sudden, new-born feeling of something that was worse than discomfort stirring peculiar emotions within her. They dashed on among the trees, guided by the screams, and burst through into a small clearing, in the midst of which stood a solitary oak, and so had view of a painful and dreadful sight—Justice, the fetish of all-perfect man, about to accept a victim.

There was a group of men under a great bough of the oak, and one of the men was trying to throw a rope up over the branch, and even as the old Judge and his wife ran across the clearing he succeeded; whereupon several of the men ran and caught hold of the dangling end, and proceeded to haul the slack over the branch. Mrs. Judge Barclay saw then, all in a moment, as it were, that the other end of the rope was fast about the neck of a man who had his back turned to her, and she experienced a peculiar little sick feeling, as Nature began to have birth in her. She was still hastening toward the group as she discovered these details, and in almost the same instant she discovered that the screaming came from a woman who was held by a couple of the men.

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HER glance went again to the others. Several of them had stepped back a little from the noosed man, and had their guns in their hands. She recognized the Sheriff, and knew that the man with the rope about his neck was Jem Turrill. She did not know that they were going to shoot poor Jem full up with lead as soon as he should have swung sufficiently to get the "taste of the hangin' into his heart." Nor, if she had realized the fact, would she have understood that mercy was really at the back of the men's intention. And so came Mrs. Judge Barclay to the group of men intent about their work.

The condemned lad stood pale and grimly silent, swallowing constantly and dreadfully at the dryness that seemed to fill his throat, and looking with rather wild eyes at the woman held by the two men; for it was his old mother.

"Help! Help!" she would scream, and fall into a sudden, trembling silence, quivering so that it shook the two brawny men who held her so callously determined. And again her scream would ring out madly, "Help! Help!" crying to any God that might be listening.

Mrs. Judge Barclay stood a moment, looking at it all with wider eyes than she had ever opened before—seeing it, and at last beginning, with a horrible sickness in all her being, to understand something of what old Judge Barclay, her husband, had never been given words or skill to make seen to her.

The mother's crying broke out again, fierce and terrible and almost past humanity in its white-hot intensity: "Help! Help!" And she began to struggle, almost like a maniac, with the two big men who held her. And the dreadfulness of it all! It was she, his own mother, who had innocently led the posse to where her son was hid. They had watched her, as I have told, and had followed her secretly as she slipped away quietly through the woods, taking a towelful of damper and "tinned goods" to Jem's hiding-place.

She it was who had managed the escape for him by conveying drink to the man on guard, and she it was who had found the hiding-place for him, and she it was who had brought him food; and now she had brought him to his death. She began to scream incoherent words, and to give out scarcely human sounds, and her struggles became so fierce that her clothing was ripped literally into ribbons of cloth and cotton in the hands of the two unemotional, determined men who held her off from going to her son.

Old Mrs. Barclay stared, suffering at last in understanding of the stern and deathly intention that informed the group of men "about their business," and her heart sick with the horror of human pain that seemed suddenly to emanate from that one plague-spot of tragedy and fill all the earth. Her grim old face had grown ghastly under its pale, tan color. This was justice, the justice that she had so constantly hammered into her husband the need of dealing without shrinking; this madly desperate mother, and this lad, barely out of his teens standing noosed within a few yards of her, and already, as it were, looking at his mother from the other side of the Eternity of Death. And the Sheriff's men standing all around, so dreadly purposeful and obdurate to the voice of natural pity that wailed at them out of the lips of the crazed mother. This was what she—she, Anna Barclay, had urged her husband toward, many and many a time. She had never known; never! never!

She could almost have screamed her denial. No wonder John had been always so inclined toward mercy. My God! were there often such scenes as this, going on in the same world? Was there often this weight of terror and complete horror bred into being by the deliberate doings of man, for any purpose whatever, call it justice or by any other name? This dreadfulness! This dreadfulness that choked her. This—and suddenly she found her voice:

"Stop!" she said, with a voice as deep and hoarse as a man's. "Stop!" She waved her hands a moment incoherently, fighting to take control of the fierce passion of horror and agony of pity that beat through every fiber of her, possessing her. "Stop!" she said again; and then managed to say: "How dare you—oh, how dare all you men be met together here to do *this*—to do such a thing!" She stopped abruptly, and stared at the men, as if they were things incredibly monstrous, and they, on their part, looked round at her and the Judge, only then aware of their advent.

"Let him go at once!" said old Mrs. Judge Barclay, speaking again, as her voice

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became once more a controllable possession. "Let him go to his mother! Let them both go!"

ACROSS the ring of men the mother had fallen suddenly to her knees; her mouth was gabbering breathless words of prayer, her hands outstretched at arm's length, her fingers twining and intertwining madly.

"Save him!" came her voice at last, no louder than a hoarse whisper; yet having a strange quality that seemed to make the very leaves above them stir and rustle. And with the two completed words she pitched forward out of the relaxed hands of the two men who held her, on to her face with a little thump—her forehead and nose plowing into the trampled mud beneath the tree.

There came a queer little inarticulate cry from Jem, and he began to fight desperately, bound hands and feet as he was, toward where his mother lay on her knees and face; but the Sheriff and one of the men caught him and dragged him back beneath the overreaching bough. The Sheriff signed hastily to old Judge Barclay, and the Judge put his arm about his wife to lead her away. But she tore from him and faced the Sheriff.

"It'll be all right, mum," said that man. "You go along quiet now with the Jedge. We ain't goin' to hurt Jem more'n the flap of a fly's tail. Don't ye worrit."

"You're going to hang that young man as soon as I've gone!" burst in Mrs. Barclay, very white-faced, but with now a strange shining in her eyes. "That's what you mean to do!"

"Yep," said the Sheriff, scratching his head, and trying to catch Judge Barclay's eye; but Judge Barclay was looking only at his wife, with something that was new in the way of his look.

"Yep," said the Sheriff again. "Jem's boun' to hang, sure, mum; but we ain't goin' to hurt him worth a mench. We'll turn 'm off nice an' easy. You go along of the Jedge now."

But he never finished his piece of excellent and practical advice, for, with a bound astonishing in so elderly a woman, she came at him, and he gave back helplessly, not knowing how to cope with such an attack. Yet she had no meaning to strike him. Instead, before he knew anything beyond his bewilderment she had opened his holster and twitched out the heavy revolver; then with a leap she was back from him, facing the group:

"Hands up!" she screamed, her voice cracking and her old eyes literally blazing. "You shall not murder that boy; not for what he's done! Hands up, I say, or I'll surely shoot at you!"

The old woman's expression was so full of a desperate resolve that the men's hands went up, though maybe a little hesitatingly and doubtfully. Yet they had gone up, and up they remained, as the muzzle of the heavy weapon menaced first one and then another. For suddenly it was very clear to the men that the woman was wound up to such a pitch of intensity that she would shoot first and do the thinking afterward.

It is true that several of the men held their revolvers in their hands; but what could they do! They could, undoubtedly, have snapped off shots at the old woman; but they were not going to shoot old Mrs. Judge Barclay: the thought was below their horizon of practical things. Neither would it have done to have attempted to rush her; for there would have been, most surely, one or two sudden deaths achieved in the operation, and the after-situation also would have to be faced; so, as I have told, they kept up their hands, and watched the old woman with quite as much curiosity as rancor. They were very practical men.

Old Judge Barclay, however, failed to realize the entire earnestness of the situation, and after a moment of stupefaction began to run toward his wife, in vast distress.

"Anna! Anna!" he cried out. "Anna, my dear, put that down and come away!"

But she ripped round at him.

"Stand back, John!" she shouted shrilly. "I shall shoot!"

But the old Judge still failed to realize, and continued to come toward her.

"Stand back, John, or I shall shoot!" she screamed. "I'm fair wound up, an' you'll make me do murder! Stand back, John!"

AS SHE spoke she fired the pistol to frighten him; and because she had never fired a pistol before, she had no suspicion that the reason her husband's hat flew off was that the bullet had

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passed clean through the crown of it, just grazing his bald old head. If she had thought at all about the displacing of the hat, she would merely have supposed that his sudden start at the shot accounted for it.

The old Judge came to an abrupt stand, his face grown very white; but he said not a word more, and his wife took no further notice of him, not even insisting on his putting up his hands. She wheeled round sharply again upon the Sheriff and his posse, and discovered the Sheriff half-way across the grass toward her; for he had thought to catch and disarm her while her attention was taken with the Judge. The old woman's eyes blazed as she saw how nearly he had succeeded.

"Back!" she screamed at him, and in the same instant fired. The Sheriff reeled a moment, then steadied himself, and thrust his hands earnestly above his head. The bullet had struck him full in the stomach, but the huge buckle of his belt had turned it so that it had glanced out through his shirt again harmlessly, a mere half-flattened little chunk of lead.

"Get back to the others!" ordered the old woman in a voice high and tense. "Turn your backs, all of you!"

As one man the posse faced about.

"Go off a bit from the young man," said Mrs. Judge Barclay. "Stop there. Keep there!"

She ran swiftly to the prisoner, whirled him round on his heels with one vigorous hand and pulled out the sheath-knife, which had never been removed from his belt. She slashed at the thin rope about his wrists, and all the time she kept a strict watch upon the line of masculine backs before her. She cut the rope at last, and his hands also, but not badly; then pushed the knife into his cramped fingers, and the lad proceeded to cut loose the lashings about his ankles.

"Now, go!" said old Mrs. Judge Barclay fiercely, as he stood free. "An' mind an' sin no more. Go!"

She almost shrieked as he stood and stared at her, and she pointed to the horses of the posse. He looked swiftly toward his mother; but the Judge's wife beat him with her free hand, fiercely, pushing him toward the horses. And suddenly he obeyed, and began to run stiffly toward the animals.

When he reached them he displayed a little of that sense and ability which I have hinted lay cloaked so securely below his somewhat habitually sullen expression; for having freed all the reins, he gathered them into his hand and mounted the finest of the horses, which belonged to the Sheriff; then, leading the rest, he went off at a fast trot.

The line of silent men began to stir uneasily, and old Mrs. Judge Barclay steadied them with her voice. For a space of fifteen minutes, timed by her old-fashioned gold watch, she stood on guard. At the end of that time the mother of Jem came to, and lifted a muddy face, stiffening sharply into terror with suddenly returned memory. She hove herself up giddily on to her knees, and glared upward and round her, expecting dreadfully to see something that swayed, writhing, above her from the great branch.

Said Mrs. Judge Barclay:

"Your son's gone, ma'am. He'll be well down the trail by this time."

Her voice began to shake curiously as she spoke, and suddenly she reached her breaking-point and collapsed, settling all in a heap on the muddy ground. She never heard the dazed, crazy words of fierce gratitude that the other woman gave out as she bent over her, aiding the old Judge to lay her down straight.

OLD Mrs. Judge Barclay came round some minutes later, to find her mouth uncomfortably full of bad whisky, and her husband still anxiously loosening garments that Jem's mother had already loosed quite sufficiently. His clumsy old fingers shook as he fumbled, and she put up a sudden hand of tenderness and caught the fumbling fingers and held them with an almost hysterical firmness. In a little while she rose to a sitting position, and looked round at the ring of men, who stood, each with his whisky-flask in his hand, ready, as it might be thought, to insure that the supply of restorative should not run dry.

Presently Mrs. Judge Barclay spoke:

"Now," she said, turning her white, plucky old face toward the Sheriff, "if you must hang somebody, hang me; not a bit of a young boy like that!"

But they hanged neither old Mrs. Judge Barclay nor young Jem Turrill, for the latter got clear away. And concerning the former, if the truth must be known, the

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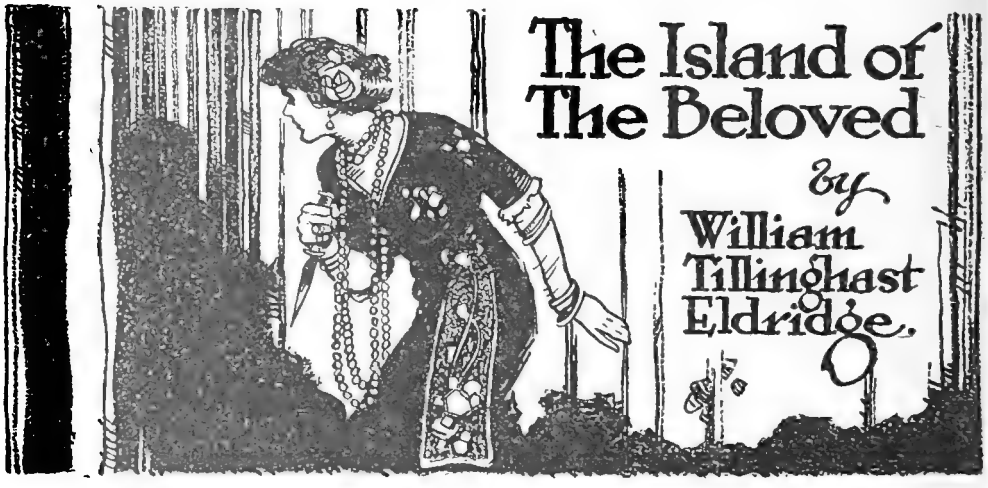
Sheriff and his men entertain for her a respect few women have ever screwed out of their somewhat rugged-natured hearts. Moreover, they kept the affair strictly quiet, for it was not one in which any of them was able to discover undue credit to himself. As for old Judge Barclay, he had nothing of reproach for his wife. In his heart he was unfeignedly thankful that young Jem had escaped, and equally glad, in another fashion, that Providence or kind Chance had ordered it that his wife should witness the working of the unmitigated justice that she had so often upheld.



SYNOPSIS—Gordon, an American architect employed by the millionaire Stephen Grey to copy the château on the Island of the Beloved, finds by a roadside the body of the Marquis de Roquesford, friend of the old Count D'Artois, hereditary ruler of the Island; also a wounded man, whom he carries to the home of his American missionary friends, the Hunters, with whom Stephen Grey's niece is visiting. The two daughters of the Count had eloped, with a beach-comber and a ship's officer. Guy D'Estes, dare-devil son of the former, has been brought up by the Count. Hearing of De Roquesford's death, the Count faints; later admits he had sent him for his granddaughter, the child of his other daughter. The Count, D'Estes and Von Brunt, the Count's companion and medical adviser, all seem keen to find the murderer. In an atmosphere of suspicion Gordon finally decides to trust D'Estes and work with him. D'Estes visits Zetel, a sweetheart; then Madam Lavaille, a regal woman of the world who also loves him but threatens to marry the old Count to inherit his money and the Island. D'Estes is later attacked by her jealous overseer, Karl Hemming, and is rescued by Gordon. Gordon finds Mr. and Mrs. Hunter and Elsa Grey bound and gagged and the wounded man gone. Elsa calls on the Count; Gordon surprises Madam Lavaille watching them with a dagger in her hand.

CHAPTER IX

THE KNIFE AGAIN

ASPASIA LAVAILLE was again beautiful. Her shoulders lifted in the merest shrug, a smile touched her red lips and the white of her even teeth flashed. In her cheeks, until then deathly pale, came a flush of color like pink shells.

Gordon had met her several times. He had known that she possessed that animated, dominating beauty which caught and held a man's regard; perhaps controlled his brain. When her eyes opened with a startled look, as they apparently noted the dagger in his hands for the first time, he realized that she was an accomplished actress.

Without a word she took the weapon from his hand and slipped it into the bosom of her dress.

"Emotion is a strange thing, Monsieur Gordon," she whispered. "It runs away with some people. I must be careful."

"I think you have need to be very careful, Madame Lavaille," he said.

In the depths of her eyes a question flashed. They asked him whether he meant to threaten.

"And more than careful," she smiled.

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"Perhaps a guardian. Would monsieur accept the task?"

There was a challenge in the words and Gordon did not hesitate.

"I might find it necessary," he said. "If I did, I would have need to know exactly what I must look for. Madame could help me."

"If madame would," she gave back. "Because I asked if you would care for such a responsibility I did not say that I would select monsieur."

"You have no explanation then to offer?"

"To monsieur? I would choose my confessor; you assumed the rôle without bidding."

Her voice was low, even, with no trace of anger or emotion. They might have been discussing a most ordinary incident.

"True," nodded Gordon, "but even you can hardly deny that I had good cause. Possibly you have met few Americans; we have a habit of offering protection to those in danger and sometimes we move quickly."

"I can believe the last. But you speak of danger. Did you think I might turn that toy upon myself?"

Gordon's lips set.

"It was not much of a toy. I will not fence with you, Madame Lavaille, but I think I have seen enough to warrant my suggesting that you have a care. When a fellow countrywoman is in danger, or another for that matter, I shall always be on my guard."

"That explains monsieur's interest in the search that is covering the breadth of the island. The girl who came with De Roquesford was an American, I believe?"

"I do not think it is necessary for me to enlighten Madame Lavaille on any subject. Rather would I have her enlighten me."

HER manner seemed to change suddenly. She had held stately courteous until then, with a certain aloofness beneath the surface, tinged by a haughty dignity, that suggested her displeasure at his questions. Now she stepped toward him and her long slender fingers touched his sleeve.

"When a fellow countrywoman is in danger," she repeated. "Monsieur, I do not speak to draw you from the subject upon which you would ask light, but from my heart. You are one who looks beneath the surface, perhaps you read my soul and say: 'Madame Lavaille is shallow, scheming, self-centered.' Yet I say that you have your task, as you have named it, open to your hand."

"And the danger lies——" His eyes were upon her face.

"Not with me, monsieur, believe me. Mademoiselle Grey awakes no enmity within my heart."

"There were but two at the far end of the room," he suggested.

"I have told you first that a woman's emotion is a strange thing. Do you think it safe for man or woman to go unarmed upon this island? If my hand stole to my bosom —is it so strange?"

"A hand might move and lie; features, when supposedly unnoted, seldom do."

She laughed again, a low, rippling laugh of much music.

"I have warned monsieur; I have nothing else to say," and she parted the curtains to the alcove.

With her long slender arm raised to hold back the heavy draperies she turned to meet his eyes.

He could have detained her, but the folly of attempting to do so was very apparent to him. Possibly she had spoken with a certain amount of truth in her words, for somehow he could not bring himself to believe that she had followed D'Artois and Elsa with the actual purpose of harming either.

Why should she wish Elsa Grey's death? If the Count was the one against whom she bore malice, then certainly the time was ill chosen when he was in the company of a companion. Was it not likely that she had come behind them, watched with surprise and jealousy—even as he had—and the weapon in her hand came there as she suggested?

The curtain dropped and the woman passed from Gordon's sight. He bent his ear to make sure that she went the way she had come. When he heard the door close he drew a deep breath and stepped out.

HIS glance traveled to the far end of the room. D'Artois and Elsa were gone. It startled him for an instant, and then he stepped into the middle of the room, for he saw them pass through a door on the far side, directly opposite the one by which they had entered the gallery.

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As he debated what he should do he heard a low laugh and glanced up toward the balcony. Guy D'Estes waved to him.

"Wait," called the Count's grandson, "I am coming down."

He disappeared from view, stepped into a small alcove, and the next instant pushed aside a panel in the wall and appeared.

"A winding stairs," said D'Estes with a nod over his shoulder. "Handy."

"I shall have to look into it," smiled Gordon. "If I am to copy this place line for line, I should learn of every nook and crevice."

D'Estes stopped short as he led the way toward a seat behind the pillars.

"That's so," he nodded. "Perhaps you know as much about the back stairs in this huge ark as I do."

"I have come across some," admitted Gordon. "When a wall measures ten feet through and there is no need of that strength in the masonry I have looked further."

D'Estes sank down into one corner of the huge settle and began to roll a cigarette, an occupation in which he seemed forever engaged.

"Have you looked any of these hidden rooms over very lately?" he asked.

"I have not been making much headway in my work the past few days."

"Which doesn't answer my question. No," rushed on D'Estes, "I fancy we all, who know, have been on the hunt. Is it not strange that nothing has turned up? Grandfather is busy, Von Brunt has been out at night a number of times—he's active if he does smoke all day—Madame Lavaille is having her turn, you and the parson are going it, and I have an idea Miss Grey is moving. Why is it that nothing is found?"

"Perhaps because frankness does not underlie the efforts. If we all worked together we might get somewhere."

"I agree," nodded D'Estes, "and that is why I have just asked if you had turned up odd rooms in this place the last few days."

Gordon shook his head. He was studying the other sharply, not at all certain what was coming. D'Estes continued:

"I have. I've searched at night and in the day. I know of a good many, but I know there are others of which I have no information. Perhaps you have come across some of these?"

"What do you look for?" questioned Gordon.

He was wondering suddenly whether the grandfather's suspicions of the grandson—which were beyond doubt known to D'Estes—were to be countered by a recalcitrant charge. For the first time Gordon felt a doubt of D'Estes's innocence.

"What are we looking for?" retorted D'Estes.

Gordon leaned forward.

"In other words," he said slowly, "you mean to say that you think your grandfather is hiding his own granddaughter, that he killed De Roquesford."

D'Estes began to smile.

"'Pon my word, Gordon, I thought you had more brains. Oh, come!" he added quickly, "don't get mad. Of course I don't think grandfather stuck a knife into De Roquesford nor had it stuck. Man, he loved the Marquis, we all know that."

"Then what do you mean?" growled Gordon, still a little angry that he should have showed his feelings so openly.

"Where are we all hunting, save perhaps myself? Far afield. Somebody that is clever is at the bottom of this game, some one —— clever, Gordon. If I had a thing to hide I'd hide it under the hunter's nose. We all look up when on a scent. We make a hunt ten times the harder because we haven't the wit to think of little things. You can come and go in this rambling pile of stones without any one being the wiser. There are doors that open here and there and they are never locked. There are wings and towers that have passed unvisited for years. I give the men who did this thing credit for a deal of brains. I've looked here, *after* being a fool and hunting elsewhere."

"And what have you found?" retorted Gordon.

"I've just begun to look," answered D'Estes meekly enough. "When I saw you," the Count's grandson began to chuckle, "holding Lavaille's hand, I thought I'd make the suggestion that I have to you, when you were through with your *tête-à-tête*."

Gordon showed no surprise.

"Did you see Madame Lavaille's face?" he asked.

"I did," nodded D'Estes.

"And perhaps you can tell me what it read like to you; you know the lady better than I."

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"A lovely slap," laughed D'Estes, making another brown cigarette. "Her face? It said: 'I can love, I can kill, I can hate, or like!'"

"Oh, don't talk riddles," growled Gordon. "Tell me to go to the devil or say what you do think."

"And get such a punch as my friend did on the cliff road?" D'Estes shook his head and then quickly, as he caught Gordon's growing frown: "What was Aspasia after?"

"Couldn't you see? Your grandfather and Miss Grey."

"No!" D'Estes sat straight and an ugly, hard line formed about his mouth. "Do you mean they were together and Lavaille was watching *them?* Gordon, I hate her and I love her, she is beautiful, but if that look on her face meant harm——"

"To whom?" frowned Gordon, when the words stopped short.

"If she meant harm to Miss Grey, I'll—I'll——"

"Miss Grey is quite capable of caring for herself," answered Gordon curtly, "and if not, she has friends who can."

D'Estes shot him a look, the anger went out of his face and he nodded. After a moment of silence he got up.

"Do you think my suggestion worth following?" he asked.

"I'll get rid of this pad and meet you," nodded Gordon.

"In the front hall," agreed D'Estes, flinging his cigarette away and rolling another.

GORDON passed to his room, put away his work and went slowly toward the big main hall. As he came down the wide marble stairs he saw D'Artois go hobbling toward the library and Elsa turn in the direction of the sun-bright terrace.

He joined her and walked as far as the lower pool. He wanted to say something of Madame Lavaille's actions and yet he hesitated to alarm her, or to presume so much as to suggest that it were best she should do differently.

He did say that she might in his opinion better spend her time with Marjory Hunter than with D'Artois, putting the remark upon the ground that, where things were so uncertain, it was safer if one were not so much abroad.

Her eyes searched his face, a smile played across her lips and one hand went up to brush a refractory strand of Titian hair in place. The wind across the green played gently with her skirts and draped her figure in charming lines.

"Sam tells me I am awful," she laughed, with a note of mocking horror in her voice. "You want me to sit and drink tea and knit. Jack, girls have red, red blood in their veins just the same as men. I lead the hunt when I ride to hounds—if I've a decent mount. Oh, Mr. Gordon," she mocked him, "I am for equal rights, I shall set the propaganda on this island by my acts."

"Which means you will do as you please," he had to laugh.

"Which means," she nodded, lowering her voice, "that I shall do as I darned please!" and she looked horribly shocked.

"Suppose I told you that your uncle sent me down here, not so much to make drawings of that," nodding toward the château, "as to keep an eye on you."

"Suppose I should tell you that my uncle sent me down here to see a great deal of Count D'Artois and to be very, very nice to such an old man," she gave back.

"Did he?" he demanded astonished.

"Goose!" she laughed, waving a flower before his face. "Men are such serious, serious things. I wonder they ever, ever smile!" and she marched off with a nod of her shapely head.

He would have gone with her had he not felt he must keep his appointment with D'Estes. He found the Count's grandson in the hall. On the terrace Von Brunt paced and smoked.

The two men went up the broad staircase and down a long hall to one running at right angles and into the left wing.

For half an hour they poked about, D'Estes uncovering half-hidden rooms and two inside staircases which led straight down into the cellar.

When it came to a search of the huge building, Gordon was more than ever struck with its size. At last they found themselves in a tower which stood close to the far end of the left wing.

As they were about to emerge from one of the rooms, steps came from the direction of the stairs. Both drew back as if by common impulse.

Slowly the shuffling, dragging footsteps approached. There was no need to look—it was D'Artois.

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He passed them and went on, his head bowed, his cane bearing the greater weight of his body. When he was well down the hall they stepped out to watch. It was not an uncommon thing for the Count to roam about the château; he was often met with most unexpectedly. Now he was muttering to himself, a trick he had.

Gordon turned an inquiring look upon D'Estes when the Count's grandson shot forward as if propelled by a mighty hand.

Gordon looked, and was after him. Out from the recessof a narrow stair sprang a man.

D'Estes uttered a cry of warning, but too late. The lifted arm descended, the knife fell true.

Without a word D'Artois went down upon the flags, crumpling like a broken reed.

CHAPTER X

HOW DID IT HAPPEN?

NEITHER Gordon nor Guy D'Estes stopped for a look at D'Artois.

The assassin had fled down the narrow stairs; his rushing footsteps could be heard echoing back, and the two men plunged after him.

The Count's grandson was in the lead, Gordon almost on top of him. Down the narrow and twisting stairs they rushed, heedless of a fall, their one thought to get their hands upon the fleeing man.

They came to the second floor; the footsteps raced on. Down a second flight they rushed, cleared another landing and collided with a door which had been slammed closed in their faces.

Wrenching it open, they plunged into the darkness ahead. Their descent had carried them toward the cellar and the blackness was heavy with damp and mildewed odors. At the bottom of the last flight they halted, panting. For a second their eyes studied the distance to right and left.

"There!" whispered Gordon and he dashed ahead with D'Estes at his heels.

He had caught the dim outlines of a man slipping through the feeble rays of light which came from a narrow window down ahead.

At the abrupt turn in the passage Gordon ran full into the wall. He reeled back and into D'Estes' arms.

As the Count's grandson steadied him he bent close to the American's ear.

"You are sure?" he whispered.

Gordon nodded and, catching his dazed wits, answered: "I saw some one move."

"There is but one way out that I know of. Wait here," and D'Estes went creeping back as they had come.

Gordon did as he was bade; there seemed nothing else to do, for he was now in a part of the château quite unknown to him.

His senses were all alert for the slightest sound, his eyes strove to penetrate the somber darkness of the place. Heavy odors filled his nostrils, and the chill in the air seemed to creep into his veins and leave him cold.

The heaviness of the atmosphere brought the shivers that touched his flesh, although he suddenly felt the horror in the mystery which rested upon the island and seemed ready at every turn to claim a victim.

Twice he glanced behind him. Why had D'Estes turned back so quickly? Was it possible that he was being played for a fool!

The grandson had been swift enough in taking up the pursuit, but could it be that his eagerness was prompted by a desire to make sure the murderer escaped? Gordon recalled their talk in the picture-gallery; then he had had his first misgivings concerning the man he had asserted was innocent.

HE TURNED and was half tempted to move back as he had come, when right at his elbow rose a figure. Gordon swung about, his fists clenched, but before he could strike a cautioning hiss identified the man.

"I've got the door that way closed and locked," came the low words. "If he is ahead of us we should have him. Are you armed?"

Gordon shook his head. He was still perplexed and he strove to make out D'Estes's face, hoping to read the truth in the features. Perhaps it was all a cleverly laid plot; it was beyond doubt an excellent place to lead a man into whose presence was not desired.

When he felt Guy D'Estes slip a revolver into his hand it flashed across him that the last few days, with their attending horrors, had set his nerves atune to weaving false alarms.

"How about yourself?" he demanded.

"I have a knife; perhaps I know the art

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of wielding it better than you do," answered D'Estes.

Gordon gave a nod. "Which way? I have never been in this part before."

"There is a passage ahead, one to the left and rooms on the right. The passage to the left cuts back; this one here that I came down runs from it," he nodded toward a darker, blacker spot right at their elbows, "while the left passage goes on to the door that I have locked. I've set a barrier across the stairs. Unless he got out before I moved, he must be ahead."

Gordon led off and D'Estes stepped to his side with a restraining hand.

"I'll go first," he said.

"Why?" growled Gordon.

"Whether a man lives or dies on the Island of the Beloved matters less than in the country you come from."

"We will go side by side then," said Gordon, and they did.

To the right a somber and narrow room opened. The walls were of stone and in only one or two a shaft of dim light from a barred window cut the blackness.

When all the rooms were searched and no man unearthed they stepped out into the passage.

"He could be right ahead of us, going round and round, he——"

And D'Estes leaped ahead without completing his words.

Gordon was close behind him and as he swung into the passage, which led straight toward the stairs, he heard the sound that had been caught by the Count's grandson. There was the crash of boards and boxes and the next instant Gordon dashed into the dim light that came down the tower stairs to see D'Estes leap his half-demolished barricade and fling himself upon a man who was just ahead.

Gordon broke through, flung himself into the fight and the next minute they had their prisoner disarmed and helpless.

D'Estes took Gordon's revolver and set it against the man's temple.

"Oh, I have a mind to pull the trigger!" he laughed with fiendish glee; "I have a mind!"

INSTEAD he struck a match, and as the flickering flame threw the somber walls and pressing shadows into dimly distinguishable distances the white face of the prisoner was revealed.

"Who in —— are you?" demanded the Count's grandson.

There was no answer.

D'Estes reached down and plucked the man to his feet as if he were a child.

"We've no time to fool with you now," he growled. "Shall we put him into one of these cells? I want to go back to grandfather."

Gordon nodded and they marched the man ahead of them and into a dimly lighted dungeon.

"It is the old part of the château. They say the first D'Artois stuck niggers in here when they didn't dance to his tune. Get sleep if you can, you cur!" he called as he slammed the door closed and drove the rusty bolts home. "Get sleep, and find what it is to be—everlasting sleep for you."

D'Estes turned with an unpleasant laugh upon his lips and on the run the two men dashed up the stairs down which they had raced so swiftly.

D'Artois lay where he had fallen. Gordon dropped down, turned him over, and looked at the grandson in wonder.

"He is alive," he said.

"God!" whispered D'Estes.

Gordon lifted the Count and D'Estes was off for the inhabited part of the chateau.

"I'll get Von Brunt; take him to his room. When there is life there is hope; hurry, Gordon."

The American moved swiftly, but long before he found himself in the furnished part of the building D'Estes was out of sight. He went straight to the Count's bedchamber, a huge, high-ceilinged room furnished in a fashion long ago discarded.

There was a posted and carved bed of gilt with heavy curtains, dressers with mirrors decked with cupids, and heavy portières at window and door. Many chairs stood about the wall, pictures hung one upon the other against the faded paper, and, in a row, six chests, bound in brass and bars of iron, flanked the fireplace. It was in these chests, so rumor had it, that the first D'Artois had stored his wealth, only to have his life taken in the posted bed and the locks broken before his glazing eyes.

Gordon put the Count down and turned toward the next room. A servant answered his summons and at the same moment Von Brunt and D'Estes came rushing in from the hall.

"Devils of flight!" roared the Doctor,

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"is it possible? Gordon, I'd hardly believe this liar; D'Artois, you murdered, you gone too?" and Von Brunt leaned over the bed.

CHAPTER XI

THE EMPTY CELL

FOR half an hour the German worked in his shirt sleeves, ordering Gordon and D'Estes here and there demanding instruments, bandages and at last his pipe, as he stepped back, his hands red with blood.

"Well?" demanded Gordon, for while he and the Count's grandson had been permitted to attend they had not been near enough to see what Von Brunt was about.

"—— lucky he got it in the back and not the front. But ——, say, Guy D'Estes, who did this thing?"

"Answer a civil question when its put to you, German man," smiled D'Estes.

"We all have to die," growled the Doctor. "The hag told his grandfather he'd go at sixty; so he did. She said his father would see seventy; it was so. He is good for eighty if she's more than two-thirds truthful."

"Oh, very well," nodded the grandson. "If he is not to die now, we have other things to do."

Von Brunt poured out some medicine, got it down D'Artois's throat and wheeled. "Right, if you never were before. Come down."

The German led the way into the library and sat down. He lighted his pipe, and without troubling to roll down his sleeves or wash his hands, turned on Gordon.

"Well?" he said.

The American gave him the facts, and when he mentioned that the one who had struck D'Artois down was a prisoner the Doctor's eyes flashed fire.

"What do you make of it?" he asked when he had looked at D'Estes as if he expected him to speak and the grandson simply pulled at his cigarette.

"Oh, wise doctor, tell us," smiled the younger man.

Von Brunt buried his chin in his chest and looked out of slits of eyes at the two across from him.

"I'll tell you what I *did* think," he said with all the gruffness gone out of his voice. "I thought D'Artois murdered De Roquesford!"

Gordon sat up with a start.

"You thought the Count murdered his friend!" cried the American, hardly able to believe his own ears.

"I shall tell him so as soon as he is able to listen to me, and that won't be long, for I've fixed him up well. He'll be on his feet by morning. The knife went down, so, through the flesh. It was the blow that felled him."

"Why did the German man think my dear grandfather killed the *only* friend he had?" asked D'Estes in a soft purr that argued strong self-control upon his temper.

"For reasons I'll give your grandfather and not you!" answered Von Brunt gruffly.

D'Estes got up and walked over to the Doctor.

"You dirty German swine!" he said in a calm voice, "you will tell me now or I'll choke your vile tongue from your mouth and pull it out—so!" and D'Estes clenched his fist before Von Brunt's face and gave a quick twist to his wrist.

The German smiled up into D'Estes face and said nothing. The younger man leaned down, when Gordon, who had held silent, leaped to his feet and swung D'Estes about.

"If you two men think it's time to fight between yourselves, I'll tell you you are both fools! There is work for us to do."

D'Estes's face flushed and his eyes flashed fire. Then he made a sweeping bow to the American, gave a broad smile to Von Brunt and walked over to his chair.

"Right," grunted the Doctor; "have the devil up and let's see him. The man that killed De Roquesford will be a pleasing sight for my eye. Devils in flight, Mr. Gordon, I would look upon the man who might have picked me next!"

A KNOCK came at the door and D'Artois's servant entered.

"My master is himself. He has asked me if the man who struck him down was caught."

D'Estes nodded.

"In the old tower. We have him shut up tight. Tell Count D'Artois to dream of sweet revenge."

The servant went out and closed the door.

"What did I say? He will be cursing by morning. I have a mind the hag was right," muttered Von Brunt.

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"Shall we fetch the fellow up and question him?" demanded D'Estes, turning to Gordon.

"We certainly must find out what he knows," agreed the American.

"We'll go down and talk with him in his hole," said Von Brunt. "He may have friends about. If you fetch him here, he could slip away."

"We are not old men like you," smiled D'Estes.

"I fancy the Doctor is right," put in Gordon. "We would only have to bring him up and take him back. Suppose we have a light and go down to him?"

D'Estes nodded instant agreement and the three arose.

"I'll have a coat and clean hands; I might want to choke him," said Von Brunt.

The Doctor was gone fully ten minutes. D'Estes was growing impatient when the German's round head slipped through the half-open door and he announced that he was ready.

They went up the stairs, along the hall and came upon D'Artois at the head of the tower stairs. The three stopped short in their amazement.

"Fool, fool!" cried Von Brunt. "Back to bed with you! You can not walk even with a servant. Back to bed!" and he motioned D'Artois's black to lead his master away.

The Count smiled a ghastly smile and pointed to his own blood upon the floor.

"I had a mind to see where it happened. I'll do as I please," and he went tottering down the hall on his servant's arm.

The three men watched him out of sight and then tramped down the tower stairs in single file. At the bottom D'Estes, who led the way and had the light, stopped as if to pick up something. A little farther on he did the same thing again.

Gordon, who was directly behind him, could not see that he actually lifted something from the ground; Von Brunt, who was the last, simply swore because the light was not held steady.

They walked down the passage, reached the door of the dungeon and D'Estes thrust back the bolts. His light flashed to every corner of the stone-lined room and the three men saw in a glance that the place was empty!

Von Brunt ripped out an oath, D'Estes was very still, while Gordon went in to search. He took the light and satisfied himself that there was no way of escape. When they looked the cellar over they found the door D'Estes had locked just before they caught the man standing wide open.

They went back up-stairs, for there was nothing else to do. Footprints could not be traced on the flags and the shell drive outside proved a useless place to search.

When they got back to the main hall Von Brunt went up to see D'Artois. Then D'Estes turned to Gordon and held out his hand. In the palm lay a little tassel and a gold bead.

He nodded toward the first.

"Grandfather's dressing gown has the mates," he said.

"And the other?" frowned Gordon.

"Aspasia Lavaille has a dress with gold beads upon it," answered D'Estes quietly.

"She wore it to-day," whispered Gordon.

D'Estes nodded and threw the two ornaments into the fireplace.

CHAPTER XII

A DISCOVERY

AN UNEARTHLY shriek from the second floor took Gordon and D'Estes on a rush up the broad staircase, prepared for almost anything.

On the floor lay D'Artois' servant and Von Brunt stood over him with a drawn creese which he had torn from the wall.

"Devils in flight!" roared the Doctor, as the two younger men dashed to his side.

He flung the creese into the corner and marched down-stairs.

In the library, to which room Gordon and D'Estes followed the German, the American demanded some explanation of the scene they had witnessed.

"Did you ever try making a liar talk?" came the retort.

"Was the black lying?" questioned D'Estes smiling.

"No," growled Von Brunt. "When I told him he was going to die he clung to his story."

"Ah," nodded the grandson. "Then what did you ask him and what did he say? The truth is worth hearing."

"Who let that villain you two landed free? The black swears by all that is sacred D'Artois went no farther than the head of the stairs."

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"Oh, really," yawned D'Estes, "you didn't fancy my grandfather, who loves to turn the barbs of torture, would free the man who stuck a knife into him?"

"I think most anything," retorted Von Brunt. "That you caught the man I believe, for Mr. Gordon vouches for the story. That I'm prepared to believe anything I have no doubt. Things are happening these days to make a man turn gray and loose his reason."

"You could do the first, though the locks are spare," laughed D'Estes.

For a wonder Von Brunt laughed too, and Gordon flung himself into a chair and gave way to his mirth. It was a relief to all of them to laugh.

At last Gordon signed to them both and they sat down.

"We were talking a while ago about this hunt, Doctor," he said. "There are a number of us on the task, each working in his own way. Would it not be best for us to get together and see if we can not help each other? There is a chance that the Count's granddaughter is no longer alive, but there is also a chance that she is. We must find her and Burnett. The man has got a broken ankle that should have been set days ago. If he isn't found soon, he may be a cripple for life; and there is the girl."

"And De Roquesford's body," added Von Brunt. "Three things to hunt for and nothing found. Bad, bad. Perhaps a boat took them off; there are other islands not such a great distance from here."

"Take your hunt to the end of the earth," put in D'Estes. "You are right, Gordon, we should help each other. Von Brunt doesn't like the idea."

"I do, if I don't like you," snapped the Doctor. "I'd suffer a good deal for an answer to all this."

"Even me," nodded D'Estes. "Yet you won't be frank because you think I am the one at the bottom of it all. And I—well I won't be frank either, because I don't like you, German man."

"A devil of a long ways we will get," growled Von Brunt.

"Oh, but we can. I'm going," and D'Estes got up. "I shall see you at Hunter's this evening," he added, turning to Gordon. "I say to you, Von Brunt, tell him all you think evil about me and what wild fancies you have. Tell him frankly where you tramp after dark. We don't think Gordon stuck De Roquesford. As you and I can't get along, let's make him a clearing-house. Gordon, if you find the trail leads to me I'll come along with you to grandfather's revenge like a child to a mother's breast. Von Brunt, do you say as much to him when I'm gone," and D'Estes walked out of the room, whistling merrily.

GORDON saw something rather amusing in this novel suggestion and he smiled with the result that Von Brunt's anger was vented upon him for the first time.

"What the devil are you grinning for, you clown?" roared the Doctor. "Taken in by his sweet words? Clever, clever as the fiends of hell, you fool!"

Gordon stopped smiling and walked over to the German.

"You have the habit, Doctor Von Brunt, of calling names as you please. I overlook this because I do believe it's a real habit, but let it be the last time with me!"

"Devils in flight, what a temper! Oh well," with a wave of his fat hand, "I won't quarrel with you, for I think you are honest. Honest men are needed here."

"Thanks," nodded Gordon, not relenting in his sternness. "It seems to me that you might find others if you tried. Guy D'Estes may have morals that do not commend him, but I for one say he did not kill De Roquesford."

Von Brunt leaned forward in his chair and fixed Gordon with a sharp regard. Then he surprised the American as much as anything had surprised him the last few days.

"I hate him, I like him. I think he did for De Roquesford because of the girl. He wanted her to love, for he saw her and took a fancy to her face, or he wanted her to kill, because he would have everything for himself. Before God, Gordon, I hope he is innocent! I do to-day; yesterday I could have killed him!"

Gordon knit his brows.

"Why do you hope he is innocent to-day when yesterday you could have killed him?"

"Yesterday I believed D'Artois knew when De Roquesford was to breathe his last. Yes, the same as I told you when D'Estes was here. If that was so I could have killed his grandson with pleasure because D'Artois loves Guy D'Estes."

"And now you think D'Artois innocent. I am as much amazed at what you have told

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me as at your suspicions of your friend."

"When you told me here that De Roquesford was gone, D'Artois went down on that table! Yes. When I got hold of his wrist the pulse was good, as good as his old body can put up. That even pulse told me D'Artois knew what you told me long before you spoke."

Gordon got out his pipe and lighted it.

"And what has changed your suspicions, founded on a pulse beat?"

"What's just happened," replied Von Brunt.

"Suppose the attack upon D'Artois had nothing to do with this murder of De Roquesford?" questioned Gordon.

"There is the bare chance," admitted the Doctor.

"Suppose D'Artois did go down into the cellar and let that man free?"

"He never did. I know that black of his well enough to know when he is lying."

"Then you feel certain D'Artois is innocent?"

"Don't you? You didn't suspect him?"

"I never did," admitted Gordon, "and I am surprised that you should have allowed yourself to harbor such a thought simply because his pulse was strong. You know better than I do how much he cared for De Roquesford. More than that, man, the Marquis had gone to fetch the Count's granddaughter. Didn't he want her here?"

"Want her? Gordon, he counted the days until she should arrive."

"And still you suspected him." Gordon got up with a shake of his head.

He again felt that doubt concerning Von Brunt's sanity as he had once or twice before.

"Is there anything that you can tell me, following D'Estes' suggestion, provided you agree to it?"

"Nothing. I am in the dark," replied the Doctor quietly. "I've been out at night, as he said, prowling about, trying to pick up some clew. I know nothing."

"Then I'm going to talk with D'Artois," announced Gordon, and he walked out of the room.

HE FOUND the Count propped up in his bed reading Darwin's theory on the evolution of life.

"A book," announced the Frenchman, "that makes me think," and he threw it at the head of his servant as if his last wish were to exercise his brain. That the Count was decidedly weak saved the black's head.

"I'm afraid I have made poor progress in this search," suggested Gordon, drawing up a chair. "You told me this morning that you had heard nothing more."

"A boat was seen off the eastern shore night before last," announced D'Artois in a weak voice. "I am trying to learn something more about it. Can it be that they have carried her off? We'd find her if she were on this island and—" he leaned across the bed and stuck out his long neck, "I'm sure she is on this island."

"What makes you so sure of that?" questioned Gordon.

"I feel things. My father and his father before him felt things. The D'Artois who made the Island of the Beloved what it is whispered a warning to Louis Seize which, had it been heeded, would have saved France."

"You have nothing more than that to base your assertion upon?" questioned Gordon, too practical to believe in such theories.

D'Artois waved his servant out of the room and sat up straight. He was clothed in a white dressing-sack and upon his head rested a peaked nightcap that gave him a decidedly grotesque appearance.

"How did that man you shut up in the tower get away?" demanded D'Artois.

"I should like to know myself. Perhaps if we had the truth we would be a long way toward a solution of the entire affair."

D'Artois began to chuckle.

"Perhaps the trail would lead to me. Von Brunt is a fool, a greater one than I thought, and yet, mark you, Monsieur Gordon, I love him. To think he should have harbored the idea that I killed De Roquesford! But I forgive him. I shall pray for him as I do for my dear friend, gone, God knows where, in my service. Yet how could he have died better? It is an honor to suffer for a D'Artois."

"The Doctor told you, then," suggested Gordon.

D'Artois's chuckle sprang up again.

"Oh, he told me. On his knees he confessed his hardness of heart. His perfect frankness saved him my wrath. I might have killed him for such a thought if I had not loved him so much."

"You were at the top of the stairs, Count D'Artois, about the time that man we cap-

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tured must have been set free. You didn't go down the stairs far enough to hear anything?"

D'Artois shot a sharp look at Gordon.

"Why do you ask me that? Do you know that Madame Lavaille was in the base of the tower?"

"Was she?" Gordon looked surprised.

"She was coming up those stairs as I came along the hall on my servant's arm. She saw me, but thought I did not see her, thought my old eyes were too weak. She went back hurriedly."

"And you followed her as far as the bottom of the stairs," suggested Gordon, remembering where D'Estes had picked up the tassel which had come off the Count's dressing-sack.

"As far as the first landing," corrected the Count. "Then I grew dizzy and ordered my black to turn about."

Gordon nodded. He was not at all certain as to whether D'Artois was lying or not, but he knew it was useless to try and press the truth out of the man if he was unwilling to be honest with him.

He was ready to believe that D'Artois had seen Madame Lavaille, as he said, for there had been the gold bead found in the cellar. He was not ready to think D'Artois could have any reason for freeing the man who had tried to kill him.

"Then you think Madame Lavaille let that fellow go?" he questioned.

"Hush!" D'Artois lifted a white and shaking hand. "She hears everything; her ears are like pearls, but they have great power."

"Then perhaps she has heard you tell me she was in the tower," retorted Gordon, a little disgusted with the old Frenchman.

"I am foolish," laughed D'Artois. "Perhaps my brain is not as active as it was; perhaps it holds queer fancies. Come, do you think you will find my granddaughter? Answer me that."

JUST about enough had happened the past three days to awake Gordon's bump of obstinacy to the full. Possibly he was prompted considerably by his natural desire to get at the truth. Or it might have been conceit. At any rate he answered D'Artois with positiveness.

"I'll find your granddaughter and the murderer of De Roquesford or never leave this island!" he said.

The Count's eyes were upon his face in a searching, penetrating regard.

"Good," he said slowly. "I can do nothing save lie here and eat my heart out with hope. I am fortunate to have such help, but then the D'Artois were always clever in gathering men about them. They rewarded those men."

Gordon saw the Count was in no mood to impart any information if he had it. He got up.

"I am not working for any reward," he said somewhat stiffly.

"Firebrands, Americans," smiled the Count, and sank down among his pillows.

"Nothing you have to say?" suggested Gordon.

It sometimes happened that the Count left the most important thing until the very last, although he might have been aching to impart it from the very beginning.

This time proved no exception. D'Artois stirred.

"I have a man in mind. He lives on the eastern shore. A black. His father was a tribesman before him, his family lost when the D'Artois gained. Strength, mind, courage; above the simple black. You go to him. If any one can find what is taking place beneath the surface, he is the one. He knows a great deal. Quezet, he is called."

"I have heard of him from Mr. Hunter," nodded Gordon. "You do not want to see him?"

"Go to him and then tell me what he will do. Offer him what he asks; but bargain, bargain; I would give my last cent, but there is no need to be robbed."

"Very well," agreed Gordon, and he walked out of the Count's bedchamber wondering whether he should be disgusted with the old Frenchman or pity him.

He saw nothing of Von Brunt below stairs and so started for the village.

It was growing dark. By the time he had covered half the distance the night shut in swiftly, for dark banking clouds were rolling up from the west.

He took the short cut across the fields and reached the road. As he was about to turn toward the village he heard an angry voice above him. He stopped dead short.

"I'll have it my way," came the words.

Gordon turned and walked up the road. He was certain he had recognized D'Estes' voice and he was wondering whether the Count's grandson was to fight another battle

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where poor De Roquesford had fallen.

As he swung about the turn in the road he caught a swift rush of feet and the bushes snapped and cracked as three or four men broke through them. He called, got no answer and went ahead.

The road was quite empty and Gordon decided he had turned from his path for nothing. Then something prompted him to part the bushes where the men had plunged out of sight.

He did so, carelessly, and caught his breath. In a little clearing, looking up at him, lay De Roquesford's body!

CHAPTER XIII

D'ESTES' FEELINGS CHANGE

WHEN Guy D'Estes left Von Brunt and Gordon in the library he went down across the lawn, found his horse at the stables, and rode away.

In his mind he was turning over a number of questions. Why had Aspasia Lavaille followed his grandfather and Miss Grey into the picture-gallery and what explanation was there for the look he had seen upon her face? How had the man escaped who had attacked Count D'Artois? Who was he?

He was also wondering over the fact that Gordon's opinion concerning him in connection with De Roquesford's murder had changed. The American had said nothing, but the Count's grandson felt the change that had come over the American's feelings. He rather hoped that he had offset such an opinion by his final offer.

He wondered whether Gordon would take him seriously, if Von Brunt would be perfectly frank as he had proposed.

He frowned when he thought of the German. D'Estes disliked the Doctor, but not quite so much as he pretended. He enjoyed nagging any man, and Von Brunt got so mad under the gaff that D'Estes always kept it turning. Still he was beginning to have an idea he would hate Von Brunt in the end; he hadn't liked the Doctor's suggestion concerning his grandfather's guilt.

D'Estes rode in through the wood path and his signal brought Zetel Marguel quickly to his side.

"Zetel," he smiled, touching her lips, "I shall soon cease this talking with men night and day; I shall come to my Zetel."

"I understand," she whispered. "They say that you, beloved, killed De Roquesford."

Her eyes lifted to his in an appealing glance filled with childlike worship.

He shook his head.

"Men must talk about these things; and settle them," he answered her.

"I pray that it is not so, each night I pray."

"That is well, Zetel. It is a woman's place to pray. But have you news for me?"

She shook her head sadly and for the first time a frown crossed D'Estes's face.

"It is not like you to fail me, Zetel. I want news and you should get it in your uncle's house. I took you from there and brought you here, but you can return—for a night. I brought you because you loved me and I loved you—and you gave yourself—but you must do more, you must find things. I would know, Zetel."

"My beloved," she begged, "I went there and the men were so rough, two of them kissed me——"

He burst out laughing.

"That is a terrible thing. Go again, Zetel; let five of them kiss you, but learn what I would know. When I have that information tell me what the five men look like and I will kill them," and he swung into the saddle.

She slipped to his stirrup and with one hand clinging to his boot-leg lifted pleading eyes to his. His face did not relent and she shrank back.

"I will go," she said, and turned away.

He laughed, waved her a kiss and rode out into the main rode.

When he came to Madame Lavaille's he turned in and rode to the door. Aspasia sat under the shade of heavy awnings which kept out the rays of the setting sun and made the deep recesses of the veranda delightfully cool.

SMILINGLY he came to Aspasia's side and lifted her hand to his lips. Then he sank into a chair across from her, drew a cool drink to his elbow and began to roll a cigarette.

Madame Lavaille had hardly moved and her face was not alive with animation as he was accustomed to see it when he called.

When D'Estes had quite finished his cigarette and had it lighted he looked across and smiled as he nodded.

"When mortal man falls in disgrace he

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sinks prone to earth and begs. Aspasia, I am at your feet. Name the number of the beads I must tell and the hours of fasting."

"Then you are quite conscious of the fact that I have been neglected?" she said quietly.

He leaned forward impulsively and threw out one hand. "I am quite conscious of the fact that you do love me and not my gout-ridden grandfather. Your moods whisper that you are truly feminine, Aspasia, as wonderful as you are."

"Perhaps my moods tell you that I may not love you, but still do not care to be neglected."

"Women are alike," he sighed, settling back in his chair. "They demand all, and we must give."

"Do you?"

"Give? I give you all."

"There is Zetel Marguel," she suggested.

"And Paunet's daughter," he added. "I drink often at the second court from the dock. Do you know the little Spanish widow there? Her husband was found, two months ago, on the rocks beyond the dock, dead."

"I remember. And still the Spanish widow allows you to come near her."

"Because she knows that I did not kill her dear, drunken, brute of a husband. She is more charitable of mind than some."

Madame Lavaille shrugged. "Will you name any others?"

Then he laughed.

"I will name as many as you wish, or allow you to do so. But first, Aspasia, might I ask how many gold beads you have lost?"

Her brows lifted in question.

"From the dress you wore this afternoon. It is a dark, damp hole—the cellar of the tower in the left wing. A wicked place to leave little gold beads."

A smile at last touched Madame Lavaille's lips.

"Where were you hiding when I went into the tower? I am glad you did not show yourself, for I should have been frightened had I heard a sound."

"I can well believe *you* would have been very much frightened. It would have been like you."

"Why do you want to know what I was doing in the tower?" she demanded with a disdainful gesture for his sarcasm.

"Because I locked a man in one of the old dungeons and some one was kind enough to draw the bolts and set him free."

"And the man?"

"I would dearly love to know his name. His face was quite unfamiliar to me, and I know nearly every face upon this island."

"Why did you shut him in such a vile place?"

"You want me to tell the story. Because he ran a knife deep into my dear grandfather's body."

Aspasia Lavaille sat straight in her chair and for the first time her indifference left her.

"D'Artois is dead?" she whispered.

"Now you love me, now you love me!" he cried. "You will not have me marry my dear cousin. You will marry me and rule the Island of the Beloved. I think you would rule it, too," he added.

"Guy," she cried with real feeling in her voice, "is it possible that you have had this done? De Roquesford, D'Artois; and you have the girl."

HE SETTLED down into his chair and his long legs were thrust out in front of him. With his fingers crossed he pressed his teeth and looked at her over his clenched hands.

"It is a most curious thing, Aspasia. I love you, but truly I fear your dominating power. You care for me and yet you see power and wealth before your love. You think that I killed De Roquesford and have my cousin. I have a fancy—heaven grant it may be wrong—that you killed the Marquis and have my cousin; even that you sent that man to the head of the tower stairs and later let him go free. It is a curious set of feeling for the two of us to have and still love each other."

"It is perhaps interesting," she smiled.

"It could be called that," he nodded.

"And to make it more so you will tell me why you have such evil thoughts concerning me."

"Because you are beautiful. Because where you came from you must have ruled, and you would rule here. De Roquesford brought one who might claim a part of this vast island. She would interfere with your plans. She was whisked away, so cleverly that I can not find her," he bowed his head. "There is no one as clever as that save my Aspasia. A gold bead lay at the foot of the tower stairs; the man I shut up is gone. If

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grandfather dies before the hag's time, with the dear cousin out of the way, I would have everything and you would have me. At least, Aspasia, I would have said that yesterday, but not to-day, and that is stealing Von Brunt's words, a queer thing for me to do."

She moved quickly in her chair.

"You are not guilty, then?" she questioned, looking at him in wonder. "You would not say what you have if you were, or," and her eyes flashed fire, "do you say this to throw me off my guard?"

"Why should I try to do that? Because I feared the man you sent after me? Has Karl recovered from his blackened eye?"

"How did Karl get hurt?"

"Hasn't he told you? No, I didn't do it. My dear Aspasia, I came very near having mass said over my dear soul. Would you have wept and turned on Karl if his knife fitted the wounds?"

She shrugged. "I will not answer such childish questions. You know that I did not ask Karl to do such a thing."

"I have thought that it could not be so, unless you had the cousin and a fancy to marry D'Artois. He'd die quickly or sooner than I if I'm given my right time."

"I could kill you myself, Guy, if I cared for you to die."

"True," he nodded, "in this way," and he drained the glass at his elbow.

SHE sank deep into her chair. It was growing dusk, but her eyes shone brilliantly in her pale face.

"You know nothing of your cousin," she murmured. "Will you believe as readily that I know nothing?"

"If you will tell me where the man is that I shut up."

"I was in the tower early this afternoon. Did you ever think that perhaps this cousin, whom I concede now you, too, are looking for, might be hidden in some of those many rooms?"

He slapped the arm of his chair and laughed good naturedly.

"I have sometimes fancied you had the power of reading thoughts before they were put into words."

"Which means?"

"I have searched the old château with the same purpose. Is that how that bead came there?"

"If you found a bead? Perhaps I have not been so clever as you. I shall look to my gown to see."

"You will find at least one gone and find the one I found in the fireplace in the château library. I did not invent."

"You have not answered me; is D'Artois dead?"

D'Estes shrugged. "The hag told the truth, I fancy."

"Is he badly hurt?"

"Not so badly but that he was up and prowling about a short time after Von Brunt got through with him," and D'Estes knit his brow.

He was thinking now of the tassel he had found in the tower cellar, although he was not too sure of Aspasia's explanation.

"And now that you have questioned me," she said after a long silence, "will you allow me to ask why I have been neglected? I love you, Guy, even if I love position and wealth."

"You have named my reasons for me; Zetel, the Spanish widow, Paunet's daughter," he was telling them off on his fingers as he smiled.

"And you would add what other names, or a name?"

"This is wonderful!" he laughed. "I shall confess to all my loves. You will not ask me to give them up before we are formally betrothed?"

She leaned forward with her arms on the sides of the chair.

"You have spoken of leaving the Island of the Beloved. They say that the man who was here not such a great while ago and who studied the château—the man for whom Gordon works—is very wealthy. He has no children."

D'Estes's smile left his face suddenly.

"Aspasia I know for myself what I am," he said. "If Elsa Grey grants me her company, would I deny myself the pleasure of sitting where the sun is bright?"

Madame Lavaille's breath caught and her face flushed suddenly.

"You mean that *she* is above you, you mean that you would talk, as you do, of marrying me, but that you would harbor no such thought of her. Beware, Guy D'Estes, a woman may know herself, know that you know, but she does not like to be told."

"And a woman may know herself and know that another knows and yet have thoughts which breed—murder!"

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His voice was cold.

Madame Lavaille sat back as if struck.

"I saw your face," he went on deliberately. "If your heart was tuned to such a look simply because you fancied that I did not know what I am and what she is, it is of no matter; for now, I have told you."

"You do love her!" she cried.

"I love the sun, a bright flower, a man who fights fair and asks no quarter, but because I love I do not always think of marriage."

"You speak of marriage to me."

"I think such thoughts grow less."

"So you have told me what I am."

"Aspasia, Gordon spoke with you. He fights fair and he fights hard. I do not need say more."

"You are kind to come and warn me," she sneered.

"Perhaps I am," he nodded.

"Perhaps I do not care for your warning."

D'Estes got up. "I have seen men who fought so well I would not kill them. I have never yet met the woman who so roused my admiration."

She arose and faced him. Her eyes flashed fire, her white bosom rose and fell as though she were spent in breath.

"Even her," she jeered.

"If I went mad with love and lost all measure of the love to live which one like *her* must have, I might. I fancy first I'd turn the weapon on myself."

She turned from him like a flash and stepped to the open door. There she paused and looked back. The light from the hall lamps fell full upon her beautiful face and touched the red in her cheeks. As she stood so, breathing heavily, her face went pale. One hand lifted and held straight out.

"Guy," she whispered.

"I have feared you, Aspasia, I have—" Then he smiled. "It is curious that a woman should have done this; a woman as far above me as the stars in heaven. Well, we understand that this is so. Take that dear cousin of mine, send your men to meet D'Artois, brew me any drink your clever brain may fancy; she is to be left to go her own way."

"Because she is different from me?" she cried.

"On any ground you fancy, my beloved."

She flashed him a look filled with reproach. Her eyes were like the eyes of a wounded deer. Then she turned and left him.

D'ESTES stood still a moment, shrugged and went down the steps. He rode away whistling and never stopped until he had dismounted and turned his horse into a corral at a planter's house above the village.

From there he went on afoot and finally came out upon the cliff road. He started toward the village, rounded a turn and leaped back as a man came plunging through the roadside bushes.

"You, it was you!" cried Gordon, getting his hands upon D'Estes.

"It is," nodded the Count's grandson, making no move, although the American's fingers set hard into his arms.

"You! You've lied to me, lied to me!"

"Have I? Point out the lie."

Gordon was not too sure and D'Estes' coolness made him wonder.

Without a word he swung the man about and pushed him through the bushes.

In the darkness the white face of De Roquesford could be made out.

D'Estes looked at Gordon and the American returned the question in the glance.

CHAPTER XIV

WHAT CAME OF A DEAD BODY

WHEN Gordon saw that D'Estes recognized the body he swung the Count's grandson around.

"I heard your voice and came back here—I was going down the road—and the men dashed away, but you returned. You suspected that I heard you, for I called."

D'Estes nodded and looked at the body. Then he crossed himself.

"We have found one of the things we were hunting for. Can't we find the rest?"

"You mean that I am mistaken?" demanded Gordon.

"If you think I brought De Roquesford here," nodded D'Estes, glancing up.

He was rather pale and his voice swung low.

"Confound it, D'Estes, I doubted you to-day for the first time and a minute ago I was sure you were mixed up in this thing. Now I know I'm wrong. Why is it?"

"Perhaps because I don't shout my innocence from the housetops," smiled D'Estes,

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and stepped out into the road. "I don't like the look of his face," he explained.

"We've got to do something with the body," exclaimed Gordon.

D'Estes raised his hand. In the distance came the rumble of wheels and the two men watched until a bullock cart swung toward them in the deepening dusk. D'Estes stepped into the road and held up his hand. He went close to the cart and, recognizing the driver, ordered him to stop. Reaching over, he pulled a heavy blanket from the bottom of the cart and, motioning to Gordon, stepped back through the bushes.

Together they wrapped the Marquis in the blanket and between them carried the body into the road.

When the carter had a good look at the shape of the thing his blankets covered he cried out and crossed himself.

"Be still, you fool!" ordered D'Estes. "There," as they put De Roquesford down, "drive to the château and when you get there call for Doctor Von Brunt. You can tell him this is with my compliments," and D'Estes laughed softly.

The driver's mouth hung wide open and his round fish eyes turned to Gordon appealingly.

"Damnation!" roared D'Estes, "must I twist your tail to make you hear? If the body is not at the château in half an hour I'll bundle *you* in *your* blanket to-morrow and send you to your wife. Get on your seat and drive!"

The man turned with alacrity then and the cart rumbled away.

"It's a terrible thing to do, D'Estes. The shock to Von Brunt will be——"

"Damnably fine for his nerves! That's why I did it."

Gordon looked at the broken bushes.

"We might try tracking. The men who brought the body could tell us something."

"There is a path through the brush below here. It skirts the hill. There is no other way that they could have come," and he turned into the bushes after Gordon.

IN THE darkness, with the wind stirring the trees more deeply each moment, they went down over the hillside and finally came to the path. There a lighted match helped them and, taking the direction of the tracks, they turned from the village and went along.

Twice Gordon stopped and held up a warning hand.

"Some one is behind us," he said the second time.

They waited for a long while, heard nothing and at last went on.

"I know of but one man who would trail me," said D'Estes after a little, "and he is such a clumsy fool he would tell us that he was behind long ago; we would not be uncertain."

When the path forked, Gordon struck another match.

"They turn to the right; there is a woman's track now."

"It grows in interest; when woman enters, look for excitement," prophesied D'Estes.

At the foot of the hill they heard the first sound other than the night wind in the forest. A twig snapped and into the path ahead of them stepped a shadow. They had stopped just before this and both held silent.

"A woman," whispered D'Estes, and walked ahead. "*Ma cherie*," he said, when the girl, who had drawn back, sprang toward him with a glad cry.

"Zetel!" he whispered, and he had her in his arms. Then he turned and called to Gordon.

"Speak," said D'Estes, when he had introduced the American. "Here, perhaps, you will find proof of me."

The girl hung back with a strange shyness, but in a low voice she told of what had befallen her since D'Estes ordered her to make a further effort to get him information.

When she had finished D'Estes looked at Gordon and smiled.

"Zetel," he said, "you have done well, and it is growing late."

He took her hand, smiled down upon her, and signed that she should go. To Gordon he indicated the path ahead and the two started quickly toward the more open ground below the woods.

"We should get horses," suggested Gordon, "it is some way."

D'Estes nodded and walking rapidly they turned toward the village. On the outskirts the Count's grandson halted at a house and going directly to the stable in the rear proceeded to saddle two animals, small rugged ponies.

Once mounted, the two men turned their horses' heads toward the east and rode out into the open country.

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"You are sure of the girl?" questioned Gordon.

"As you may be sure of woman. I know the place she speaks of, a little village down the coast, started a number of years back when they thought there was a good harbor beyond D'Artois Point. The sand filled in across the harbor entrance. The place now is a tumbled-down set of houses; a few people live in them. The strange part to me is that I have looked the ground over and found nothing."

"She said those men whom she overheard talking in her uncle's house said the girl was there," urged Gordon. He was building on this sudden information and his blood leaped in his veins. Here, after days of hunting, idleness and unexpected turns, with much talk and little action, it looked as if chance—so he saw it—had thrown opportunity in their path.

D'Estes answered with a nod as he threw his head low to the rushing wind.

"And that they talked of De Roquesford's body getting ripe," laughed D'Estes. "Said they should have left it in the road and would take it back."

"And she followed them down this road, waited until they returned and saw them carry the body up the hill."

D'Estes nodded again.

"Perhaps we get them. Here," he added passing over a revolver and a knife, "I have their mates. You will go unarmed. You've a good fist, Gordon, and a smashing arm, as my late friend of the cliff road tells every one who looks at his face, but you need something better in a place like this."

Gordon slipped the pistol into his pocket and passed back the dagger.

"I'll shoot if I have to, but I'm not up to the knife."

"Oh, well," laughed D'Estes, "I'll take both. One in each hand works well if you have need to cut your way through half a dozen bent on stopping you."

THEY rode on, speaking a little, but bending their faces low, for the wind, tanged with heavy salt odors, blew stronger and stronger in their faces. The rushing air moaned among the rocks to the right, for now the road led close to the ocean. Against the cliffs the surf beat with a persistent roar. Once or twice a dash of rain struck them in the face and the shaggy manes of their ponies blew back across their hands damp and sticky.

At last D'Estes drew rein and turned into a grove of palms. Both men dismounted and tied their ponies.

"Now," said D'Estes, "how shall we go about it? Walk right in and tell them what we have come for?"

"I should certainly say it was better to move cautiously, get the lay of the land and then decide what to do."

"I know the house from what Zetel said. I'd rather walk in. It's a pleasure to see men's faces look their surprise and some of them turn white in fear of death. A man that fears death is sickening, eh, Gordon?"

"I love life pretty well," answered the American, turning through the woods after D'Estes.

"So do I," came the quick agreement, "but I can die. My great-great-grandfather's hag should have carried her look into the future still farther and named my age when I was to get the knife. It is some comfort to *know* when the end will come. It's a curious thing," added D'Estes stopping, "but she said grandfather was to have two daughters—a black witch who lived over on the eastern end—and that they were to be married as they were. She named a girl for the offspring of my aunt and she was to have great happiness all her life. I was quite left out of the story."

He laughed and stepped ahead.

They parted the bushes and came into a clearing. Before them stretched uneven streets and low black blotches which were houses huddled together.

"At the far end is the best and biggest one," said D'Estes. "A trader built it, and that's our goal."

He led off again, keeping well within the shadows, and came finally to the rear of a two-storied building standing in a young grove. The house was dark and looked uninhabited.

Gordon motioned toward a narrow balcony which ran about the second story.

"We could make it from that tree," he whispered.

D'Estes nodded and stepped out of the shadows.

A tall palm grew near the house and with a spring Gordon got hold of the trunk with his two hands. Then hand over hand he went up, keeping on the side of the tree next the house. Under his weight the palm bent

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inward and when he was level with the balcony he was able to put out a hand and get a grip upon the rail. Swinging over he let go the tree and pulled himself up. D'Estes followed him and, breathing heavily, the two men were upon the balcony side by side.

The eaves of the building they could touch with extended hand and there was no more than room for one man to walk along the balcony.

Gordon started ahead and at each window the two stopped and strove to peer through the closed shutters. At the front of the house they looked down. A man sat smoking at the foot of the balcony stairs, which led up close to the main door of the building.

Cautiously the two men passed around to the far side of the house. The third window showed a faint crack of light, the first sign of the place being inhabited that they had seen.

With his knife D'Estes pried the swivels open and put his eye to the crack. He straightened and motioned Gordon to look.

The American saw a small room and in a chair a girl reading!

CHAPTER XV

THE FIGHT ON THE BALCONY

"IT MUST be!"

Gordon's voice rang with a suppressed note of wild exultation. He had no idea what Celia Haverstraw looked like —descriptions had been too meager and D'Artois had known nothing—but he was certain that the girl was an American and there was naturally but one conclusion to reach: success had at last come to them.

D'Estes' lips carried a smile.

"My dear cousin," he said. "How surprised Aspasia would be to know this was the first time I have seen her. I do not think she is overattractive."

"Would you expect her to be? Attractive! Man, do you think of nothing else when you look at a woman?"

"I think of a good many things when I look at a woman. Is she pretty, will her smile please me, shall I find her brilliant or dull, is she virtuous? I think——"

"Stop thinking and act. Burnett must be here if she is. How are we to get them out?"

"Lower her over the balcony and drop her," replied D'Estes a bit sullenly. "As for Burnett, he's a man; let him get out as best he can."

"Burnett has got a smashed foot. If it hasn't been tended, he may be delirious. We've got to get them both out."

"Oh, very well, lead on. I'm losing interest, Gordon. Unless we find some trouble in this thing, we shall have little pay for our bother."

"I'm praying for no trouble. We must make sure first that there are no guards."

D'Estes gave a nod and turned to look down at the ground. He drew back suddenly and his hand fell upon Gordon's arm.

"Some one moved in that clump of bushes," he whispered.

They both dropped back against the wall and held silent. Gordon could feel that his companion's interest, with the chance of danger in the thing, was again fully aroused.

"Creep toward the end; the room must be in the corner," whispered Gordon.

He turned as he spoke and on hands and knees worked to the end of the building. D'Estes followed after him and at the corner they both looked up to study the ground.

Satisfied that no one was moving about, they turned to a long French window which opened upon the balcony and beyond all doubt into the room that they had viewed through the first window.

With his dagger D'Estes fell to work upon the frame and the soft unpainted wood, dry-rotting with age and neglect, gave readily.

At last they cut to the catch and swung the windows open. On the inside were shutters and when they moved the swivels both were disappointed to find that no light broke through.

"It may be a connecting room, a bedroom," urged Gordon.

D'ESTES cut out two of the swivels and put his hand through. In a second the way was open and both men passed across the threshold.

Closing the shutters behind them, after drawing the glass door closed, they looked about. That they stood in a small room was evident, but it was a room dead dark, and whether it led into the one beyond seemed doubtful.

Gordon moved slowly forward with his hands before him. He came to a table, circled it, and so reached the farther wall.

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D'Estes was close behind him. On the matted floor their feet gave forth a rustling sound which, but for their heavy breathing, was all that broke the stillness.

Gordon's hand came to a casing and he touched D'Estes on the arm. Then he got hold of the knob and swung the door toward him.

For the first time they caught the light they had seen through the window. Heavy curtains covered the door on the farther side, but through their parted folds a shaft of light was plainly descernible.

Both men looked and saw the girl by the table. She had laid down her book and upon her face they noted the lines of anxiety and alarm. For a moment she sat perfectly still and then with a deep sigh dropped her arms upon the table and buried her head upon them.

Gordon measured the room and stepped through the parted curtains. As he did so, uttering a cautious word lest the girl cry out, his foot touched something soft and the next minute he went reeling back, driving full force into D'Estes.

The man who had been lying asleep at the door was as startled as the American.

He was on his feet, however, with a leap, and it was that leap which had sent Gordon crashing backward.

Tearing the curtains aside the fellow took one look and, with a spring, dashed across the room, flung open the hall door and disappeared.

The girl was on her feet, startled to silence, for the whole thing had happened so suddenly she hardly knew what had caused her guard to flee.

D'Estes ripped out an oath and got clear of Gordon. "Man, you are heavy!" he growled. "You came down on my foot!"

But Gordon was through the door like a shot, his revolver drawn.

"Where is he, the man I stepped on?" he demanded of the terror-stricken girl, who drew back beyond the table at sight of him.

"Speak, quick!" he begged. "I am a friend, Jack Gordon, an American."

The girl made a sign toward the hall door as D'Estes pushed forward.

"And I, mademoiselle, am your very dear cousin, Guy D'Estes."

Gordon had crossed to the hall door and flung a chair against it when he saw there were no bolts. Pushing the chair-top under the knob, he turned about.

"Burnett, where is Burnett?" he questioned.

The girl, who was studying D'Estes in dumb bewilderment, turned to look at Gordon.

"I don't know," she said very slowly, speaking as if she were in a daze.

Gordon came across to her in two strides.

The girl drew back with a frightened cry and her hands warded him off.

"Don't you understand?" he urged. "We are here to help you. We must be quick!" he cast a glance toward the hall door, "those men may be down on us."

SHE kept backing away from him and put the table between them. Guy D'Estes had seated himself upon the arm of a chair and begun to roll a cigarette. His face was touched with an amused smile and Gordon was conscious of the fact, not adding in the least to his good nature.

"You are Celia Haverstraw, are you not?" he demanded.

"I—er—yes," very quickly.

"Then listen. I am an American, as you can well see; this is your cousin." D'Estes jumped to his feet, clicked his heels, and made a sweeping bow.

"Will you have the goodness to stop playing the clown?" roared Gordon to D'Estes, and then turning to the girl, who had moved toward the corner as D'Estes sprang up: "We have been hunting for you; we are going to take you to your grandfather."

"Whether you are willing or not, my dear cousin," added D'Estes. "We have looked for you so long we will not be denied, now that we have found you."

"We mean you no harm," urged Gordon, seeing that the girl must be convinced and the more so for D'Estes' actions.

"No harm most certainly, we——" and D'Estes's words were cut short by a rush of feet in the hall.

Gordon leaped for the door and motioned to the girl.

"Go with him!" he begged her. "On my word of honor as a gentleman, I assure you we are working for your good, your safety!" and he put his back to the door as some one tried it.

The girl was either doubtful of their purpose or too frightened to know what she did. Instead of making the slightest move to

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obey, she backed straight into the corner and drew a chair in front of her.

Gordon stamped his foot in rage.

"Get her!" he cried to D'Estes. "Carry her out!"

D'Estes's indifference was gone with the noise in the hall. His face had changed. From an amused smile of toleration the lines had set hard.

He leaped for the girl as the first charge was made upon the door.

"He'll take you to safety," cried Gordon.

The words had no effect. As D'Estes moved, the girl uttered one terrified shriek and lifted the light chair which she had drawn close to her. With all her strength she brought it down upon Guy D'Estes's head.

"Temper, by heavens, temper!" roared D'Estes, wrenching the chair from her hand and tossing it across the room. "I love it! Dear cousin, I thought you were just a little frightened child."

He had her about the waist as he spoke and started to carry her toward the window by which they had entered. She fought him every inch of the way, crying out wildly as she struggled.

Her fingers set in D'Estes' neck and he let her go with an oath.

"My dear cousin," he hissed, as he put up his hand to the two deep nail-cuts in his cheek and neck, "you'll pay for this many times. Walk out that door and on to the balcony or I'll choke you!"

"D'Estes, for heaven's sake, go easy!" cried Gordon, pulling a bureau toward him and settling it against the door. "Miss Haverstraw, go with him."

The girl, her eyes flashing, seized another chair and held it in front of her. Her breath came in deep gasps and her cheeks were as pale as death.

"Don't you dare touch me!" she shrieked.

D'Estes leaped forward again, dodged the chair and wrenched her arms down to her side. With one arm about her he held her hand and with the other he swung her from the floor.

"Come on, Gordon," he called; "I've got the cat now, come on!"

GORDON drove the bureau into place, thus closing the door again, which had, under a steady rain of blows, been partly opened. Then he turned and dashed after D'Estes, who had disappeared into the bedroom.

As he slammed the door behind him a cry of warning came from his companion.

He could see D'Estes marked by the opened windows.

As he called, D'Estes dropped the girl to the floor and struck at the man who had leaped at him through the window.

Gordon sprang forward and the girl, gaining her feet, crashed into him.

He tried to save her from the force of the collision and went down, stumbling over a chair he had failed to see in the darkness.

When he got to his feet D'Estes was holding off two men and at least two more were on the balcony.

Gordon heard a noise at his back and wheeled as the door he had shut and bolted was thrown open.

In the shaft of light which cut the room he saw Celia Haverstraw disappear through the portières and run full tilt into the arms of four men dashing across the room.

He could have laughed aloud at her stupidity, but there was no time. The first man caught her, passed her with a rough hand to the next, and came leaping forward.

Gordon tried to get the door closed and failed. He had it half shut when two men drove against it and it was flung from his hands, nearly sending him off his feet.

With a wrench he got his revolver out and shouted a warning. He was loath to fire, and, when he saw that he must, he backed toward the bed and aimed for the ceiling. The roar of the shot broke a silence that had been filled with only rushing feet and deep breathing. The room was dark save for the shaft of light from the sitting-room and in that Gordon caught a glimpse of other men coming on in what seemed overwhelming numbers.

He fired a second time and aimed at the burly form of a fellow almost upon him. Above the roar of the shot the wild shriek, as the man went down, was terrible. Another charged, and Gordon fired again and missed. He leaped aside to dodge the ruffian and got a little closer to D'Estes.

"Too many," he panted, striking out with his pistol and fighting his way to his companion's side. "Make for the balcony, it's our only chance."

"Right!" called D'Estes, and Gordon saw him wrench a second knife from his coat.

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With one in each hand D'Estes sprang forward.

There was a wild cry of pain, an unearthly shriek that seemed to echo through the room with greater vibrating horror than the cry of the man shot down. A path opened as if by magic, and Gordon, turning and firing, backed after D'Estes.

SO THEY reached the balcony, but found themselves little better off save that only one man could come upon them at a time. Back to back they started toward the corner, D'Estes ahead, Gordon with his face to the French windows. They were hard pressed and there was no chance to swing across the rail and drop to the ground.

"Make the stair!" cried Gordon.

"Right!" came D'Estes' cheery answer.

The Count's grandson was in his element and so much did he love a fight that he had no desire to hurry things.

Gordon was holding off the men who faced him with leveled revolver. D'Estes moved ahead slowly, a knife in each hand, and now and then he made a leap forward and drove the two men who opposed him a few steps farther down the balcony.

So they reached the corner and there D'Estes' path was blocked, for a third man came rushing forward with a huge club in his hand. With this he struck right and left. D'Estes dropped one knife and wrenched out his revolver as he sprang back.

He took a quick shot and missed. The fellow sprang around the corner of the building and there, quite sheltered, he held command of the situation. With lifted club he stood ready to brain the first man who approached.

At this same moment, while D'Estes feinted to draw the fellow out where he could fire, those facing Gordon took their courage in their hands and charged as one body. Gordon fired twice and then they were upon him.

He struck right and left, but it was too close quarters.

Driven back, he carried D'Estes with him and in one fighting, struggling, cursing mass the two men and their half dozen assailants swept along the balcony.

There was no time to turn the corner. The weight of the entire mass struck the rail, the wood snapped, splintered and gave way.

Down into the yard went the eight!

TO BE CONCLUDED

Adventure

by H. Bedford-Jones

DREAM not of swords and guns galore,
In some far land across the seas
Where lusty villains bathe in gore—
Few men find chances such as these.
You ask where real adventures hide?
Go forth and find them—at your side.

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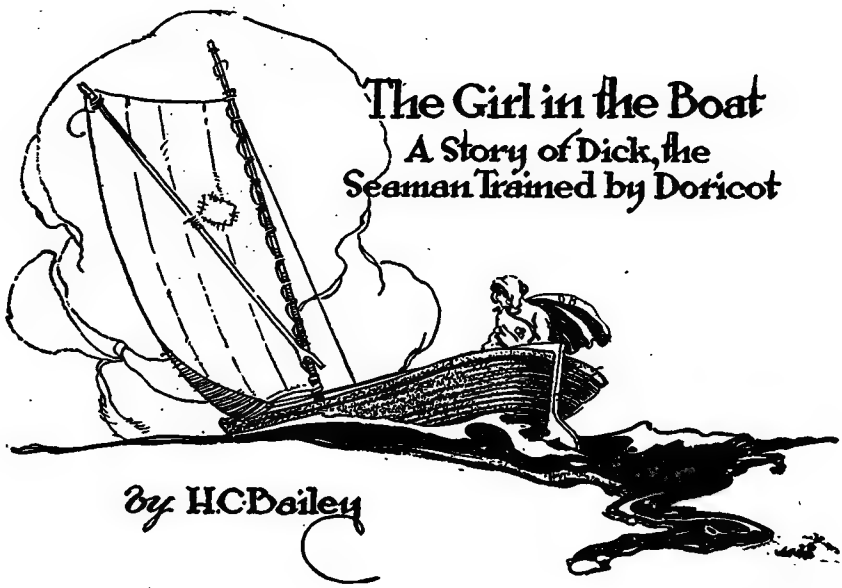

The Girl in the Boat

A Story of Dick, the Seaman Trained by Doricot

By H. C. Bailey

IT WAS a night of Spring. Violet sea and a violet sky made up the world. The stars glowed mellow and near. The south wind was a wild harmony of speed and force and genial heat. Captain Rymingtowne, who had in himself enough of these things, nevertheless opened his mouth to it, and his shoulders went back, and his fathoms of chest dilated, and he loosed his doublet at the neck, and it seemed to him that the lanterns of his ship burned with a flame of ruddy gold. Down in the waist, his crew was noisy in a glee:

"For my pastime, upon a day,
I walked alone right secretly.
In a morning of lusty May,
Me to rejoice I did apply.
Cull to me the rushes green!"

Captain Rymingtowne swore to himself tenderly. He also had music in his soul.

By good fortune, there were men upon the *Reckoning* less in sympathy with the universe. One shouted from the forecastle in a hurry, and the gunner, whose watch it was, snapped an order and the helm went over and the sails flapped and the gunner, a dry man, said what he thought.

Captain Rymingtowne came lazily across to port and looked over the side. Sliding slowly past—for the *Reckoning* still had some way on her—close in the troubled, foaming water, was a frail boat. Her lug sail was fluttering all abroad like a flag, and she staggered and reeled with no hand on the helm. A clear voice cried from her in Spanish. A woman's shape stood in her, swaying. Captain Rymingtowne saw a white face.

"Right under our bows, look you!" said the gunner with a recondite oath. "That's like a woman. That's life, that is. Then she quits the tiller, being feared of her foolishness, which is bigger foolishness and so more like a woman. And then, what's most like a woman, she curses we."

"She is praying us take her aboard," said Captain Rymingtowne.

"'Tis the same thing, do you see?" said the gunner.

"Call a boat away," said Captain Rymingtowne.

IN THE previous stories of "Witless Dick," laid in the time of Queen Elizabeth, it has been made plain that the hulking Berkshire shepherd was anything but witless, despite his seeming stupidity. Having saved Gabriel Rymingtowne from a relative's murderous plot to secure his estates and daughter, Dick assumes the name of Rymingtowne, hints that he will return for the daughter when he has made his fortune, and sets out with a Captain Doricot on a voyage to Egypt, incidentally kidnapping the Bristol alderman who financed the venture. The ship is captured, Doricot dies, the others escape. From that time, Dick sails on his own ship, the *Reckoning*.—THE EDITOR.

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"God help you," said the gunner, and shouted.

The vagabond boat had drifted astern. The woman was still to be seen erect, stretching out suppliant hands. Her voice came passionate, but still comely. Whistles and the scurry of feet and the shriek of tackle quenched the music on the *Reckoning*, and in a moment a boat shot out from her side. As it came to her, the woman flung herself into it. Neither companion nor cargo followed her and her boat was left drifting. Soon the davits shrieked again and the *Reckoning* began to go through the water and another glee rang out.

CAPTAIN RYMINGTOWNE lounged across the poop to welcome his guest. She came up the stairway from the waist, leaning on a seaman's arm and laughed as she came. Captain Rymingtowne waited for her to come into the lantern-light. She was then seen to be tall and of a rich form. A shawl was over her head and in its shadow her face might have been young or old. Her dress was of some dark stuff and simple, neither rich nor poor. The hand that gathered the shawl on her bosom was white and innocent of work.

"Give you joy of your salvation," said Captain Rymingtowne, in Spanish.

"You are no Spaniard," she said and her voice was young.

"Give me joy of that."

"It is your misfortune," she laughed. "But certainly not mine. What are you?"

"Your owner, thank you. And what are you worth in Spain?"

She hesitated and then cried out:

"Nothing, nothing!" and laughed with a girl's bitterness. "But out of Spain I can be a woman."

"'Out of the frying-pan,'" quoth Captain Rymingtowne, "'into the fire.'"

"And you—what are you?"

"A man, my girl: which is mighty bad for you. And English, which is no good to you."

"English?" she repeated with some awe or doubt. After a moment she seemed to receive new light and thanked the Virgin and said plaintively: "You will save me? I have fled from Spain to escape the Holy Inquisition."

Captain Rymingtowne whistled. It was a big affair to take sides against the Holy Office. He would be counted an enemy in all the ports of Spain. And he was not ready.

"I never had a liking for martyrs," said he. "And you—you'll not make much at the trade, my girl. What set you playing with religions?"

"Oh—oh, all the priests hate me," she said nervously. "It is not my fault. Oh, give me help! I am all alone and I am so weary and—and I am hurt. See!"

She held out most miserably a delicate hand. Chafing of rope or timber had broken half an inch of skin on the palm.

"God save you, there's a wound indeed!" said Captain Rymingtowne. "You're a fine lass to go a-sailing."

"I can sail a boat as well as you," she cried. "I have been often."

"With your husband?"

"I have no husband," she stamped her foot.

"The better for him," quoth Captain Rymingtowne. "Is there any miserable man which you belonged to?"

"I am an orphan," she cried. Then added in a breath: "And my name is Teresa Galindo and I have nothing in the world, and—oh, and I ache everywhere! I hate you! Let me rest, let me rest!" She drooped gracefully.

"I doubt if you are good for aught else," said Captain Rymingtowne and waved her off and ordered a cabin for her and turned on his heel.

I do not suppose that she troubled his dreams. She was a handsome creature, and by such he was as amused as the rest of men. He judged her also silly and vaporous, and for such he had no taste. In the minute between lying down and sleep he had resolved to put her ashore at Tarragona and let the Holy Office fight it out with her. He foresaw no tragedy.

II

HE WAS waked by the sound of firing. He came on deck in a cloak before the end of a minute. It was a little after dawn. The low coast of Spain loomed dim, and beyond it the mountain peaks were golden against the sun. Between the *Reckoning* and the land a high-charged ship was plunging under full sail.

"Fired across our bows, he did," the boatswain grumbled resentful amazement.

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"Well, be civil. Fire across his," said Dick and stared while the cloak slapped at his bare legs.

The stranger flew the yellow flag of Spain. A puff of smoke came from his main deck, again the roar of a gun, and the ball plunged into the waves a few fathoms ahead of the *Reckoning*. Dick swore encouragement at the captain of his carronade and turned away, fighting the impertinences of his cloak. The gun was fired and as the spray rose from the ricochet, it was plain that the Spaniard's bow had narrowly escaped. His indignant surprise was revealed in the agitation of his crew, who appeared to struggle with diverse orders.

Captain Rymingtowne slid below for his breeches. He was, I conceive, annoyed.

A laughing face peeped at him from behind a door.

"What is it? Are you fighting?" Teresa cried gaily.

Dick Rymingtowne said something rude.

He was quickly dressed and on deck again. But there had been no more firing and the boatswain rolled up to him with:

"They'm making signals. Wishful to speak."

"Well, I've a mind to say things," said Dick, and they backed the mainsail.

It became apparent that the Spaniard expected them to send a boat humbly for his commands. Then Dick ran down and hailed him with brief profanity, desiring him to come aboard swiftly or go whither he was bound—a place of ill repute on earth. Whereat the Spaniard laboriously lowered a great barge of a boat. A long and splendid man in a cuirass descended into her solemnly. Slowly and unhandily she was brought alongside the *Reckoning*, which flung her ropes and a rope ladder.

The splendid person in the cuirass, whose own ship had let down a gangway for him, shouted protest at this ignoble provision and was again answered briefly. Then he sent two of his crew up the ladder, who held the top of it, while clumsily and perilously he followed. He was red and panting when he arrived. His dark beard bristled rage. He had tar on his gloves and his green velvet trunk hose, and he tried to brush it off, and swore.

Captain Rymingtowne lounged up to him unamiably and grunted:

"You'll need tallow to that."

The Spaniard took a pace back and seemed to lose his breath and cried out:

"Your name, fellow!"

"And who the fiend are you?" said Captain Rymingtowne.

"I am Don Alonzo Girono, and I command his Most Catholic Majesty's ship the *Santa Maria Magdalena*. You have fired on her, sir. You fired on the flag of Spain!"

"Well, you asked for it. And I am a polite man. But you would not understand that. I am Captain Richard Rymingtowne, and that—that's the Queen of England's flag!"

"I signaled you to heave to, sir!"

"God bless your impudence!"

"I'll have you answer for this language!"

"Oh, I am good at an answer, my lad."

"I tell you, I desire to know your business on this coast!"

Dick swore at him.

"You signal me to heave to! You fire across my bows! You desire to know my business! Now, confound your eyes again! You are no better than a Barbary pirate!"

The Spaniard was plainly at a loss.

"Insolence shall not serve you, sir," he stammered. "Be sure I shall find a way to make you speak. I desire to know your business." Dick laughed at him. "I desire to know if you have seized any craft, any subject of the King of Spain."

"Oh, go away and burst," said Captain Rymingtowne. "D'ye take me for a pirate like yourself?"

There was such honesty in his irritation that the Spaniard frowned, bewilderment struggling in him with rage.

"Answer me, sir. Did you sight any boat out of Valencia last night? Did you see any, I say?"

"God help you, I think you are seeing bogeys," said Captain Rymingtowne. "But this is no madhouse. Get over the side!"

"Do you deny it, sir?" the Spaniard cried.

Captain Rymingtowne turned on his heel.

"He'll not go without his tallow, Nick," he said in English. "Give him a lump and his riddance, i' God's name."

"I warn you you shall answer this, sir!" the Spaniard cried after him.

Captain Rymingtowne lounged away.

The Spaniard hesitated, threatened again, took a step after him, and thought better of it. As he approached the side, one of

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the ship's boys thrust upon his tarry gloves a shapeless piece of tallow. He flung it down, he swore shrilly, and so vanished.

HIS boat was hardly cast off before the *Reckoning* began to move and sailed away on her old course. Don Alonzo was plainly annoyed. Before he came near his ship he was vociferating orders. He went up her side in a hurry and on deck there was great business. The *Santa Maria Magdalena* stood after the *Reckoning* under a press of sail. And Dick went down to breakfast.

It is probable that you think him very rash all on a sudden. To make a quarrel with Spain and her navy about nothing is quite unlike him. You can not suppose that he would risk a penny for the beautiful eyes of Teresa. Why did he not give her up and have done with her? I suppose he would not have thought of anything else if Don Alonzo had not made a fool of himself. But the folly of Don Alonzo was what no foreign sea captain would have endured and, least of all, that least humble of sea captains, Dick Rymingtowne. Moreover, it could not, even in that turbulent age, be upheld. The haughtiest Admiral of Spain must judge the Spaniard wrong. Therefore Dick gave his natural insolence its head.

But of course it was not master of him. In cursing and jeering at Don Alonzo he was well aware that there must be some reason in the man. The very wildness of his folly proved that it must be some potent cause which agitated him. A Spanish captain would not come firing on a blameless ship and rant about missing craft and Spanish subjects to its captain unless something of importance had been lost. Was it possible that the silly, vaporous Teresa had importance? If so, she was worth keeping. Dick felt a great appetite for breakfast.

By the table, unbidden, sat Teresa. She laughed, she started up and made him a courtesy, which amazed him.

"My homage, Sir Captain," she said. "You are the mightiest liar ever I saw."

"Was there no glass in your cabin?" Dick drawled.

No amusement appeared in his heavy face. He was reflecting that she had no business to be at his table, that she had no business to overhear his skirmish with Don Alonzo, no business to joke about it—unless she were something different from the silly, reckless creature of last night.

To be sure, she was something different. Her tall, full form had a quick life in it that startled his well-controlled pulses. There was a mocking combatant light in her eyes. She was vivid and challenging.

"What surprised me was to hear you so brave," she said demurely.

Dick waved her to a chair.

"The men are cowards where you come from," said he. "For instance, you have no husband."

"Does any one tell the truth on your ship?" she murmured.

Dick poured her out wine and cut her salt beef.

"You'll have time enough to find out."

"You'll keep me?" she cried eagerly. "Perhaps you will be that husband I so much desire."

"What is your dower?" said Captain Rymingtowne.

She tapped her bosom and made him a little bow across the table. "Myself is my fortune, my lord."

"I'll take care 'tis not my misfortune, my dear."

She laughed. "You shine, sir, but you do not gain by it, I think."

"Did any man ever gain by you?" Dick drawled, but his eyes were keen. "I'll live and you'll learn, my girl."

"What would you give to know all about me?" she cried.

"I do, my girl," Dick shrugged.

She was startled. For a moment she was uneasy. Then she recovered herself with an incredulous:

"You are wise, sir."

"I know you are a woman who knows she is pretty; that's one who'll tell me the rest of herself for the asking."

She made a grimace.

"You rate me low."

"Why not?" quoth Captain Rymingtowne.

"Then why not give me up to Don Alonzo?" she cried. "Oh, if I am but a popinjay, why should you keep me, sir?"

"He made no bid."

"Bid?"

"Why, you will fetch a price yet." He looked her over critically. "To be sure, you be too fat for my liking. But some poor fool must want you sore or why would Alonzo come banging after you to tar himself?"

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"You are base and an animal!" she cried.

Captain Rymingtowne laughed at her red face and left her and went on deck to see how Don Alonzo's ship was doing. He did not come down again.

THE *Santa Maria Magdalena*, carrying more sail than was good for her, had drawn a little ahead of the *Reckoning*. Captain Rymingtowne had no objection to that. But she was making signals, and, beating up to meet her, came half a dozen bigger ships. They, too, bore the golden flag of Spain. To that Captain Rymingtowne objected much. He whistled and said:

"Go, turn the key on madame."

But he did nothing else. He did not alter his course one point. He did not set an inch more sail. In the wake of the *Santa Maria Magdalena* he came down upon the Spanish fleet. That Don Alonzo's signals were proclaiming his wrongs and urging revenge, Dick had no sort of doubt. But you will not suspect him of the intention to fight seven ships of war. He behaved as if he had nothing to fear, because conscious virtue was plainly the safest part to play. You may think him not well fitted for it, but he was versatile. At least the spectacle of the *Reckoning* running on with the confidence of a blameless past into the midst of the Spanish fleet must needs be impressive to its Admiral.

The abundant signals from Don Alonzo were abundantly answered from the flagship. As soon as they were near enough the *Santa Maria Magdalena* shortened sail and lowered a boat and Don Alonzo was seen climbing the flag-ship's side. By that time, of course, the *Reckoning*, holding her honest way, was almost in the middle of the fleet. But there was no firing now. The Spanish Admiral signaled with proper decorum that he wished to speak.

The *Reckoning* decorously backed her mainsail. The Spaniard hailed to announce that he would send a boat. The *Reckoning* lay to. The boat came, and an officer from its stern requested that the English Captain would come aboard the ship of the Admiral Don Luis de Vasquez. Dick sent for his gloves and his blue velvet cloak and in them went over the side.

The officer of the boat received him with austere courtesy. The like awaited him aboard the flag-ship. He was conducted to the Admiral's cabin. Don Luis de Vasquez sat in state with Don Alonzo and another of his Captains, but he and the cabin surprised Dick by their simplicity. Don Luis left velvet and silk and jewels to his Captains; his cabin eschewed upholstery. He was a man of the middle size, sallow and gray, by far less imposing than the flamboyant Don Alonzo or the sturdy bluff soldier on his other side. But his grave eyes looked infinite experience.

"You understand Spanish?" he said after due bows, and Dick bowed again. "You are English and command an English ship?" Again Dick bowed. "I am told that you fired upon a ship of his Most Catholic Majesty."

"After she had fired twice at me, and with never a reason nor warning given."

"I can not allow that you were justified," said Don Luis coldly.

"Was I to let him blaze away at me as he chose?"

"It would be convenient that regret should be owned for an unhappy mistake."

"Since the gentleman was mistaken, to be sure I regret that I mistook him," Dick said blandly.

Don Luis bowed.

"Permit me to assure you that my Captain's duty was but to come to speech with you. And in no way to dishonor your flag."

"I salute his," quoth Captain Rymingtowne.

"Very well. But I am told, sir, that you answered my Captain's questions with jeers and insolence."

"How was I to answer a man which came aboard my ship and called me pirate? I told him he was making a fool of himself, and, with respect to your worship, I tell him so again."

Don Alonzo exclaimed, to be cut off by his Admiral with a curt, "You have said enough, sir." Then Dick was addressed with more geniality. "I advise you to forget this affair, sir. I tell you frankly I have nothing against you. I desire your aid. The matter is this: A lady of birth, Donna Teresa de Fazardo, the daughter of the Governor of Valencia, went sailing yesterday in a pleasure-boat and has not since been seen. What I ask of you is whether she or her boat has been sighted by your mariners."

Dick stared at him.

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"God save you, what should I do with her?"

Don Luis made a gesture of impatience.

"I suspect you of nothing, sir. I——"

"I am Richard Rymingtowne of the *Reckoning*, and no pirate nor kidnapper. You may hear of me in Genoa and my good name and——"

"I know your repute, sir, and have nothing against it. You have deserved well of Christendom." They exchanged bows. "It is but the chance that you had sighted Donna Teresa's boat?"

Dick shook his head.

"I know naught of her," he said stolidly.

"I regret to have delayed your voyage," said the Admiral, and rose.

With elaborate courtesies Dick was conducted to the boat and back again to his ship. Yet I think he was not altogether at ease. Don Luis de Vasquez was one of the men whom he always mocked and uncomfortably admired.

III

I SUSPECT that the grave dignity of Don Luis encouraged Dick to cheat him. If he had been something less lofty, something less royal, Dick might have been ready to tell him the truth. But I doubt it. There was plainly nothing to be gained by giving the girl up. There might be some profit in keeping her. As for any later trouble with Spain, Dick had entire reliance in his ability to evade it. Also, whatever the truth of the odd business might be, he was on the girl's side. All his life long, he liked youth and inclined to support it against age. He did not believe Teresa was telling the truth. A viceroy's daughter would not be running away from the Inquisition. But she was certainly running away from the Viceroy. Dick had no mind to send her back to him. And, finally, he liked sport.

The Spanish fleet beat back to southward and the *Reckoning* laid her course for Marseilles. When Dick went down to dinner he heard a thumping at the door of Teresa's cabin. He unlocked it, chuckling, and she came out with such enthusiasm that she fell upon his bosom.

"Fie, fie," he said, "and me always a modest man!"

"How dare you shut me up?" she cried, thrusting him off violently.

Dick shook his head over her.

"Your poor father!" said he. "Twenty years of you and more! Maybe thirty. To be sure, I wonder 'tis not he which ran away."

She drew back against the bulkhead and stared at him with a frown and a smile. It happened that the expression made her vivid face look its best, as her pose marked the stately beauty of her form.

"You have a rare skill to make me angry, sir," she said. "But I am gentle and will suffer you to give me dinner."

"The truth is," said Dick, "I am frightened of you. For you are a desperate young woman and I be naught better than a poor, shy mariner."

"Indeed you wrong us both, sir," she sighed demurely. "I pray you, let us dine. After dinner you may think better of yourself if not of me."

"'Tis that which I fear," Dick protested, but he suffered her to take his arm and lead him to his cabin.

There they were awaited by the breakfast-table fare, salt beef and hard biscuit and thin wine.

"We live hard," Dick apologized. "'Tis good for the virtues and the teeth."

"I should have thought such dinners would have given you an ache in both."

Dick displayed apprehension.

"But then you are such a wild piece."

"Now why do you so miscall me?" she protested plaintively, "who am as meek"—her eyelids drooped—"as meek as a nun's lily."

"I put no faith in lilies," Dick shook his head. "They be too sweet-scented for my dizzy head."

"Dizzy!" she laughed. "'Tis as hard and as cold and as tough as your own beef."

"Cold, quotha!" Dick was reproachful. "Cold? Who, I? When you ha' so bewitched me that I go quarreling with all the armadas o' Spain for to keep you by me!"

She laughed merrily.

"Oh, brave! And do I please you so well? Would you make me your lady, my lord?"

Dick rubbed his big chin.

"Would you have me, Grimalkin?"

"Grimalkin?" the word puzzled her, of course. "I do not understand."

"'Tis as much as you say, pussy-cat. For what am I but a mouse to you?"

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She compressed her lips. She looked at him severely yet with laughter in her eyes.

"If I am cat, it's no mouse you are, but the dog which worries me."

"Who would ha' thought it now?" Dick drawled. "And me feeling so frightened all the time."

"Were you ever frightened in your life, sir?"

"Ay; when I was seasick."

"And I make you feel the same?"

"Why, d'ye see, you keep me all of a jig, and when I look at you I never know whether I be on my head or my heels."

"Now did you ever feel so for any woman alive?"

Dick laughed.

"My dear, if I did, I would never tell her so."

For the first time they looked at each other with frank affection. She spoke first.

"Well, sir; you think much of yourself and perhaps I think myself no less. Shall we call friends?"

"But what's a friend?" said Dick with his hand to his chin.

"He tells the truth."

"I'll tell you the truth about you," Dick drawled; "you are a fool for your pains."

"Is that why you like me? For I profess 'tis why I like you."

"You should have been a man," said Dick.

"Pshaw!" she said, "that is what you think of every woman with as much wit as yourself."

"Do I so?" Dick grinned.

She clapped her hands.

"I knew it. There is a woman to whom you are bound. Now I am happy altogether."

For the third time Dick rubbed his chin.

"Now what do you want of the world and me?" he said slowly.

She hesitated a moment looking at him and playing with her wine-cup. Then she cried:

"Life! Life!"

"Humph!" Dick grunted. "To a woman life means a husband or two."

"Oh, dunce! A husband is what I ran from," said she.

"I am learning," Dick agreed; "you told me first you was running from the Holy Inquisition, and the Admiral he says it was from your father, and you say now it was from a husband. Are there any more after you?"

She laughed.

"How much did the Admiral tell you?"

"That you was the daughter of the Viceroy of Valencia, and you put to sea in a cock-boat for your pleasure and was lost to poor father."

"Poor father!" she tossed her head. "Well, sir, that was all true. And as for the Holy Inquisition, that was not true at all. When I found you were an English heretic, I thought you would be more of a mind to save me from Spain and Spaniards if you thought me a heretic too." She laughed. "Now I know you, I know you would fight for me because I am not ill to look at. But how could I tell an Englishman would be a gentleman?"

"You which thought all fools was Spanish," Dick murmured.

"It was my father who drove me away. I protest he is a vile tyrant! I am nothing to him, I have been nothing to him all my life, nor I nor my brothers nor sisters. He has known naught of us, seen naught of us. We have been in watch and ward of his servants; drilled by duennas and tutors. And he—he is too grand to deign a word for us. He——"

"You'll be doing without mothers in Spain?"

"I never knew my mother," said Donna Teresa, and it was a moment before her wrath swept on. "And now that I am a woman, now my father gives me orders that I am to marry a boy whom I have never seen and at once, so please you, on Corpus Christi Day. Ay, though I may loathe the creature, even as he stands at the altar! Then I told my father I would not; then I flung his words back at him. And he—I hate his narrow face!—he was not so much as angry. He said but, 'It is arranged. You will marry Don Diego, Teresa. You are fortunate.' And I went away and I took my boat and I put out to sea."

"To be sure," Dick said, "it was a kindness to the gentleman. But what will I do with you?" It is to be feared that Donna Teresa made eyes at him, for he went on austerely: "And what did you think would befall you when you put to sea?"

She laughed at him,

"A great romance, so please you, and here it is."

Dick rubbed his chin.

"Well, well! I count I'll get a price for you from your father."

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She stared. She started up.

"You would betray me?"

"'Tis all you are good for."

"I hate you! I hate you!"

Dick tapped on the table and without looking at her he said:

"My dear, you had better."

There was silence between them. When she spoke her voice was gentler.

"Take me to Genoa. I have a cousin married there, and there the women are free. I was going to Genoa."

"You—" for once Dick was startled—"you were going to Genoa? God save you! You thought you could make Genoa in that cock-boat?"

"I know all about sailing," she protested.

Dick considered her gravely.

"'Tis a miracle you are alive to-day," he said. "My dear, 'tis not much in my way indeed, but you have some matter for a prayer or so."

With which he left her, and she may have been surprised.

IV

I DO not know that he was much surprised at himself. He was by many tests, as you have seen, a man of little chivalry. And yet he had his honor. You think of loyalty to the girl of the Berkshire downs which should doubtless have made him austere to Donna Teresa. If anything is sure about him it is that he counted it the only use of his life to unite himself with Mary Rymingtowne. But he was not delicate. I do not think that loyalty would have stayed him from an hour's game at love-making. I do not doubt that Donna Teresa excited him. Her rich beauty, her restless life, called to his abounding strength.

And all that Summer's voyage to Marseilles and on from Marseilles to Genoa, she had nothing from him but bluff, mocking jokes like a brother's and a brotherly respect. He had his honor. He was an English sea captain of the same blood and the same creed as Hawkins and Drake. He could use craft and violence to his enemies without shame. He played no tricks with the helpless. And under his flag, on board his ship, virtue reigned. In his command there must be nothing unseemly.

So Donna Teresa aboard the *Reckoning* found herself as much a child as with her duenna. That she was grateful I have never been sure.

They came to Genoa and moored and were beset by a crowd of boats, and a crowd of pedlers swarmed aboard. The *Reckoning's* crew had always money to waste. The ship was tumultuous, and tumult was permitted. But as Dick came out of his cabin he found a shabby fellow in the alleyway. That was against all order. The pedlers were always forbidden below. Dick said so with oaths and a blow, and the fellow, who had a pack, whined out that he wanted to sell laces to the lady. Dick drove him on deck and into his boat.

The affair was irritating. Teresa had been persuaded to keep her cabin till word of her was sent to her cousin. The world need not be advertised that she was aboard the *Reckoning*. What did the pedler fellow know of her? There was no fear that he knew anything of importance. The crew of the *Reckoning*, tried in many a delicate business, blabbed no secrets. The pedler might have caught up some joke about a woman aboard. It was inconceivable that he knew more, and so much could do no harm. Still, better if he had known nothing.

DICK went ashore with a letter from Teresa to her cousin who was married to the heir of the Fieschi. Then he was again annoyed. The woman was gone with her family to Naples, and the servants talked of a month before she would be back. Dick dined at his favorite tavern in a morose temper. As he went back to his ship through the twilight, a man tried to stab him.

It was in one of the narrow lanes close above the harbor. A fellow lurched against him and checked him and another sprang upon him from behind. Dick flung himself backward against the wall, heard the spit of an oath and felt the sear of steel along his neck as between him and the wall the man's body was crushed. Not very sure that he was alive, he hurled himself free, plucking at his sword. Then he was alone in the lane. The two who beset him —he hardly heard the patter of their feet— had scurried away into the warren of houses.

He felt his neck. There was no worse than a deep scratch in the side of it. He had come off well. Slowly and warily he made for the quay and found his boat and

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was rowed out. He went pensively to bed. The affair was not strange. For a ship captain, or any one else who might have a purse, to be done to death in the alleys of Genoa was nothing new. Yet he had never been assailed before, and the attack fell oddly with the coming of Teresa and the curious pedler. He thought so for five minutes before he slept.

IN THE morning at breakfast he said nothing to Teresa of pedler or dagger, but he told her that her cousin was away at Naples, and she laughed at him,

"Alack, poor soul, and you so longing to be rid of me! You will have spent the night in tears! Or curses was it? My poor gentleman! And shall we sail another voyage together then?"

"No, by your leave. That you are mad I know well enough. But I'll not have you drive me mad. I would not be like you, my girl, for ten thousand ducats!"

"Indeed," Teresa gurgled, "you would be a woman of sharp corners," and she drew on the table a picture of Richard Rymingtowne's rectangular shape.

At this point it was announced that a gentleman desired speech with Captain Rymingtowne and he escaped. On the poop stood a slim fellow in black silk and velvet with braid of gold and a golden plume in his cap.

"I am Diego de Vasquez, sir," said he.

Captain Rymingtowne showed no intelligence. It was uncomfortably awkward that the gentleman whom Teresa should have married, and from whom Teresa had run, should be after her so soon. But there was no use in telling him so.

"Diego de Vasquez," Captain Rymingtowne repeated. "And who is he, if you please?"

"I am the nephew of Don Pedro de Fazardo, the Viceroy of Valencia, and I come seeking his daughter."

Dick gaped.

"What, on earth? I thought she was in heaven, being drowned, poor soul, in her innocence."

"She is in your ship, sir."

Dick patted his shoulder.

"My poor lad, you are light in the head. 'Tis a sad business to be sure, but get you to an apothecary."

"Buffoonery will not serve, sir. She is on your ship. You are lying to me as you lied to the Admiral and to Don Alonzo. She is on your ship and has been seen."

Captain Rymingtowne looked the lad up and down and (so he declares) liked him well. He had, it seems, an eye and an air, and his little golden beard was dainty. But the affair grew serious.

"You call me a liar," Dick drawled. "Boys will be calling names. Who is your friend who sees visions?" Don Diego hesitated. "A prying pedler, maybe? Give you joy of your comrades, child. Was it you or he which would have stabbed me in the back?"

Don Diego flushed.

"You may be assured, sir, when I seek your death, it shall not be stealthily. The rogue shall be punished."

"Ay, he failed," Dick sneered.

"I give you my word, sir, he had no charge from me but to discover the truth. The attack on you was his own infamy. For the which I have him in ward and will take order with him. It is I who am wronged, sir, not you, in that he sullied my service. You are answered."

"Here's a brave crow," Dick laughed.

"I am not here to change words with you. I require you yield me my cousin!"

With a genial smile, Dick considered him.

"Maybe 'tis your pretty beard—I begin to like you. Go back to Spain, dear lad, and thank God for all."

"Very well. It is very well," Don Diego grew pale and flushed again. "I carry my cause to the Duke, who will not be laggard to avenge the honor of Spain."

Dick laughed.

"God save you, you are such a fool I could believe you honestly in love. And yet you have not seen her face! Away to the Duke and cry, 'Here is a wench, my lord, which, rather than marry me, put out to sea in a cock-boat to drown. Prithee condemn her to my arms.' You will be the joy of all Italy."

Don Diego bit his lip.

"What do you know of her? You lie, I say!"

"Look where she comes," Dick shrugged. "Now God give you joy of each other!"

BY THE companionway Donna Teresa stood stately and very still. Don Diego gave a cry and started to seize her. She held up her hand against

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him and glided forward with a royal grace. Captain Rymingtowne drew aside to leave them the field, but to him she came and took his hand. It appeared to him that she had never been so desirable, never so richly a woman.

"I have come from Spain to seek you, lady," Don Diego cried.

"Don Diego de Vasquez?" she said coldly, and he bowed with some embarrassment. "You come late, sir."

"I protest I——"

"It is late to protest. What do you want of me now?"

"Now? Want?" he stammered.

"Yes. Be pleased to remember I am no more a slave to be given at my father's will."

"I will bring you back in all honor to Spain."

"And to marriage with you? I cry you mercy, sir. Thanks to this gentleman, I am free of you. Are you answered?"

"This gentleman? What is he to you or you to him?"

"He has given me life."

"This is no answer!"

"He saved me from drowning, which I had chosen rather than you. Are you answered now?"

"Are you his wife? Are you to be his wife?"

"And if I am——"

"Why, then, God help me!" quoth Captain Rymingtowne in English.

"An English heretic, a common seaman. By heaven, he has bewitched you!"

She began to laugh.

"Well, sir, you will never bewitch a woman. Go your ways and find another father to engage a wife for you."

Don Diego made her a bow and turned away to Captain Rymingtowne.

"By your leave, sir, a word in your ear. Be pleased to walk apart." They drew to the gangway. "I am answered. But I think that you owe me something."

"I doubt I'll have to thank you for a scratched face," said Captain Rymingtowne in English with a rueful glance over his shoulder. But in Spanish he answered, "At your will, lad."

"We must measure swords. I know not what your birth may be, but I waive that to meet you. Sir, I shall wait you an hour before sundown at the eastern gate."

Captain Rymingtowne looked at him with affection.

"I would give something if I could deny you," he said.

WITH a swirl of skirts, Teresa arrived between them.

"What is it? A challenge?" she cried. "Nay, that shall not be! You shall not, for my sake!" she turned to Captain Rymingtowne, very comely in her beseeching.

"Ask your cousin," he shrugged.

She turned to Don Diego.

"You have no claim on me, I think," the lad said coldly.

"Yes! Yes! Why must it end in this? What wrong have I done? I was not pledged. You had no right in me. And I —I have done no shame. Cousin, cousin, I meant you no ill. I could not be given to you bound like a beast in the cart for market! What ill has he done you? He saved me when I was drowning. He has been to me all honor. And now you would kill him for it. Ah, it is cruel, cruel! It is not me, but your pride that brought you seeking me. You have no love, you have nothing for me—nothing. But you would kill the man who dares save me. You are cruel, cruel, and as cold—as cold——"

"Cold!" the lad cried with something of a sob in his voice and turned from her. She was poignantly beautiful. He spoke huskily, looking over the sea, "I promise you the gentleman shall be safe from me."

"Ah, you'll not meet him!"

He turned again with a stamp of his foot:

"Yes, by heaven, yes!" and then he laughed a little. "Oh, yes, we must meet, he and I."

For a moment she was bewildered, then with a strange, tender cry she flung her arms about his neck.

"You would let him kill you? Oh, cousin, cousin!" and she hid her face on his shoulder and laughed and sobbed.

Captain Rymingtowne smiled sideways.

"There's what it is not to know when you are well off, my lad. Take her back to Spain and God help you!" said he.

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Across The Color-Line

Billy Blain quarrels with his best friend and makes it up again

by Walter Galt.

FOR a few days after his defeat of Battling Bill Benson there was no holding Billy Blain; he still let O'Hanlon keep his money for him, or at least the greater part of it, and he was still on perfectly good terms with the engineer, but he felt as though his foot was well up on the ladder of success at last, and he told O'Hanlon that he meant to leave the sea for good.

"Sonny, you're suffering from swelled head!" said the engineer. "It's a kid's disease, but it's none the less serious for that! It's ruined more fighting men than there are bugs in a river-front lodging-house!"

"Rot!" said Billy. "Who'd slave in a bloomin' engine-room, I'd like to know, when there's easy money to be picked up ashore at the fightin' game? I'm goin' to miss this trip and be my own manager while you're away."

"Suit yourself, sonny! That means you want your money, I suppose?"

"Keep it till just before the ship sails, anyhow; if I happen to want the coin before then I'll ask for it. I'll take a stroll around now and see what's doin'. See you later."

"Have ye made any plan o' campaign?" asked the engineer.

"You bet I have! See here!" He pulled a copy of an evening paper from his pocket. "See these blokes' pictures? I'm going to have my picture took and have it printed in the papers, wi' a bit of a write-up, same as all the rest. 'F they can get their pictures on the sporting page, so can I, can't I?"

"Um-m-m!" said O'Hanlon. "Maybe—and maybe not! And a lot o' good that's goin' to do you! But go ahead! 'Tis no use talking to a kid with a swelled head!"

"It's no use talkin' to a pudden-headed Irishman, you mean!" said Billy, who was beginning to lose his temper.

He walked off with his hands stuck deep into the trousers-pockets of his brand-new suit with a distinct feeling that he was the victim of ingratitude.

His new suit was a source of enormous satisfaction, but he took it off before being photographed; he posed in tights for the picture, facing the camera in a fighting atti-

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tude, after spending ten minutes before a looking-glass contorting his facial muscles into the most ferocious expression he could command. When the proofs were ready, he took them to show O'Hanlon.

"Why, sonny," said the engineer, "you'll scare 'em all! They'll be afraid to fight ye!"

"Aw, shut up!" answered Billy. "A man's got to look the part, hasn't he? I bet you I'll have that photograph in every one of the papers, mornin' and evenin', afore the week's out!"

"Bet me five dollars?" asked the engineer.

"Sure I will."

"You're on!"

"All right!" said Billy, "that's a bet!"

And he walked away again in dudgeon, disgusted and hurt at finding ridicule and unbelief in the one place where he thought he had a right to look for friendship and confidence.

But O'Hanlon won the bet. Billy showed his photographs to all the sporting editors in New York City and offered them copies of it for reproduction, but they failed to show any noticeable enthusiasm. The only sporting editor who took any trouble with him told him to go and win his spurs and then call in again.

"But I've won 'em!" answered Billy.

The writer screwed his face up into something that was not unlike a grin.

"Maybe!" he answered. "I haven't noticed it! Won three fights, haven't you?"

"Yes," said Billy; "won all three! And all good ones."

"Come back when you've won thirty!" said the writer, "then I'll talk to you—I'm busy now!"

THE cold shoulder he received began to tell on Billy's spirits, and now that the first hot flush of victory had had a little time to cool off, he began to get back his perspective.

He had plenty of pluck in his system and a good store of sound common sense that had been thoroughly rubbed into him in the slums of London, and presently, instead of grumbling at the luck, he began to realize that publicity of the sort he wanted could be arrived at along only one route—work; he must fight a lot more battles first, and win them.

He knew, too, from the experience he had gained in his light-weight days in England, that the fighting man who can do without a manager is the exception, not the rule; men who can fight can generally do very little else, and they need a real business man to bring them to the front; so, after dodging disconsolately along Park Row for half an afternoon, he went back to O'Hanlon to talk matters over. The engineer greeted him with a smile.

"My, but your photograph looks fine!" exclaimed O'Hanlon. "Ye must feel a proud man to see it starin' at ye from all the news-stands! And the write-up that ye got! Splendid! I'm proud to know ye! How much are ye chargin' for your autograph these days?"

"Aw, can that!" answered Billy. "Here! Here's the five dollars I owe you! Now shut up and talk sense!"

"Very good, my son!" said O'Hanlon, pocketing the money; "from now on we'll talk sense! Ye've had your vacation, now come along with me to the office, and I'll sign ye on for the next trip."

"Not me!" said Billy. "I'm no fireman! Why in —— should I sign on to shovel coal again?"

"Why? Why? d'ye ask? I'll tell ye why! Because ye're nothing but a little Cockney Englishman, that's had a bit o' luck, and has no friends! That's why! Come along up to the office, quick now! I've little time to lose!"

"Who said I hadn't got no friends? How about you, and the Skipper? Ain't you a friend o' mine?"

"Yes, ye little runt! I'm your friend! And that's one good reason why I'll drag ye to the office and kick ye all the way back again, if ye don't come of your own accord! No ye don't!" He seized Billy by the coat-collar to prevent him from escaping. "Bring my hat and coat, some one!" he shouted. "Hold still, durn ye! I tell ye, ye're coming to the office!"

"All right! Leggo!" growled Billy; "I'll come!"

The engineer let go of him, and Billy smoothed out his rumpled collar, scowling fiercely at O'Hanlon.

"Mind yer, I ain't afraid!" he said truculently.

"I know ye're not, ye little terrier! Now and then, though, it takes a bigger man than yourself to make ye see sense! Come on!"

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II

SO WHEN the steamer *Diogenes* put out to sea again, deeply laden with a general cargo for New Orleans, Billy Blain was once more a prisoner in the bowels of her, toiling with a shovel and a slicer under the exacting supervision of the Irish engineer.

Under O'Hanlon's régime a fireman had to be a fireman, and behave accordingly, and the one thing always uppermost in his engine-room was work; Billy had to work as hard as any galley-slave. But nobody could stop him dreaming, and he dreamed of championships. When the red-hot fire-door clanged, he saw the ring again and heard the gong, and the rasping of his shovel on the steel floor sounded to his ears like the shouting of the fans, and the roar of the furnaces was like the underhum of conversation that fills the ring-side.

When he slept, he dreamed of nothing but the ring. So when the second engineer one midnight pushed his towseled mop of hair through the doorway of the starboard fo'castle—where Billy still slept to keep him from fighting the other firemen—and yelled excitedly for Billy, he dreamed he had been knocked down and that his seconds were beseeching him to rise before he was counted out.

"Hi there! Blain!" yelled the second engineer. "Shake a leg, d'ye hear! Shake a leg! Wake up! Are ye dead, or what? Want any help?" he demanded, as Billy peered over the bunk-edge sleepily.

"What's up?" demanded Billy.

"Never mind what's up! Turn out and look alive!"

"What's the time?"

"After midnight—pretty near two bells—come on, hurry!"

"My watch below ain't hardly started yet!"

"Out ye come!" said the second engineer, and he seized Billy's leg and gave it a jerk, and Billy landed on the floor with a bump.

"Ouch!" he exclaimed a moment afterward, for Billy's fist buried itself in the fat below his ribs. "Cut that out, —— you! Cut it out, d'ye hear! Quick—get below—the chief's waiting for you!"

"Why didn't you say so before?" demanded Billy, pulling on his overalls and shoes.

He followed the "second" at a run through the doorway and caught sight of the backs of the other firemen as they ran from the port fo'castle toward the engine-room.

"Ship's afire—starboard bunkers!" said the "second" as he ran.

"——!" said Billy.

"Aye!" said the "second," "ye'll know what Hell's like now!"

The fire-room was pandemonium—ashes and billowing smoke and heat, and a dull red glow pervading everything. O'Hanlon was standing below the iron accommodation-ladder, stripped to the waist, and grim. In his right fist he held a piece of iron rod, and with his left he kept rubbing engine-grease into the roots of his scorched beard; he looked more like a battle-frantic Viking than an Irishman.

The firemen flitted hither and yon through the billowing smoke like ghouls, and the overhead electrics spread a ghastly glimmer over everything, half hiding the dull red glow beneath them that made the lower swirls of smoke resemble Hell-fire; and from where the smoke issued there came a roar, and every now and then a dull crash as the ship rolled and pitched; and after each crash the roar and the glow increased!

LAS BILLY started down the accommodation-ladder a half-fainting crush of Dago firemen and coal-passers struggled to escape through the starboard bunker-door.

"Get back in there!" roared O'Hanlon, springing forward to block their way and brandishing his iron rod. "Back ye get! For the love o' God! Keep that hose pointed at the fire! Back with ye!"

He beat them with the iron rod until the thing bent in his hand, and one man went down on the floor and stayed there; but their backs ran sweat and their stomachs were scorched dry and they had had enough of it; they rushed him, and bore him off his feet and backward against the accommodation-ladder. There he turned his head and caught sight of Billy.

"Here you, Billy! You'll do! Catch hold o' that nozzle and lead it right into the bunker! Get in as far as the heat'll let ye! Quick now! These curs are all afraid!"

"I don't blame 'em!" answered Billy, hanging back and looking at the glowing

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smoke that billowed more fiercely than ever through the bunker-door.

"Quick!" said O'Hanlon; "in ye get!"

But Billy still hung back. Three minutes ago he had been dreaming of championships, and he was possessed of an amazing longing to get back alive to New York again; it was more caution than actual fear that chained his feet. But O'Hanlon had no time then for splitting hairs or questioning motives. He called him a cur and struck him one blow with the iron rod and then dropped it and seized the nozzle of the hose himself and dragged it inside the bunker-door and disappeared into the fast-increasing smoke.

Billy rubbed his shoulder where the iron had hit him and bit down the rage that surged up inside him in answer to the blow.

"—— him!" he muttered, "that's what he calls a friend, is it!"

Then he seized the bight of the hose with both hands and bent his head to try to keep the stinging smoke out of his eyes and struggled in after the engineer, dragging the hose in with him. For a while the two stood in the flaming bunker holding the hose and taking turns to rush back to the bunker-door for a breath of air.

Then the second engineer got another hose rigged and sent in two Dago firemen with it; he himself had to stay outside in the engine-room, for the ship was racing against time shoreward and somebody was needed to nurse the engines and see to making steam. The Dagoes lined up with Billy and O'Hanlon, and for a little time the double stream of water seemed to be conquering the fire.

But then a seam opened in the ship's side, or a plate cracked somewhere, and a draft rushed in from up above; and slowly, inch by inch, the four were driven backward until O'Hanlon fainted with the heat and Billy and the others turned the hose on him and dragged him out on to the fire-room floor. They shut the bunker-door then, and left the fire to rage as it saw fit until the chief recovered consciousness.

The smoke in the fire-room cleared a little, but the heat grew worse, and Billy had to drag O'Hanlon nearer the accommodation-ladder before he regained his senses. Then, though, when he sat up and saw the closed iron door his rage was terrible.

"Who shut that door?" he shouted. "Ye —— coward!" he roared at Billy; "had ye got to quit when one man dropped?" He staggered to his feet and Billy supported him. "Get out o' my way, ye cur!" he ordered, and struck at him with all his might.

Billy ducked, and the chief lost his balance and staggered across the floor and landed with both hands against the door of the bunker. He reeled back then with an oath. The door was glowing—all but red-hot.

"Turn the hose on that!" roared the chief. "Cool it down and get it open!"

They manned the hose again and turned it on the iron door, and the water steamed and sizzled off it, but the door seemed to grow little cooler. Then suddenly a crash came from somewhere up inside the bunkers and a boom like the firing of a big gun followed it, and the ship shook as though she had struck a rock! The iron door burst open outward and through the opening came a burst of flame and smoke that filled the engine-room and drove all hands back toward the ladder.

"All on deck!" roared the engineer; he stood himself, though, at the foot of the ladder and counted them as they passed him.

There was one man missing and he plunged into the smoke and flame again to find him and emerged presently dragging him along the floor. He seemed too weak from his exertions to be able to lift the man, and Billy and the second engineer had to return down the ladder and help to carry him on deck.

OUTSIDE it was a pitch-black night and the sea was rising; there was light to see by, though, and the wave-tops showed white on the black sea, for the fire had spread to the cargo holds, number two hatch had been blown sky-high, and through the opening in the deck a column of flame and smoke and sparks rose up with a roar and illuminated everything.

By the light of it the crew could be seen struggling to unlash the boats and swing them outward. The ship had ceased to move, for by O'Hanlon's orders the second engineer had shut the steam off from the engines and had opened the exhaust, and the steam was roaring and ripping up to waste through the funnel; they lay broadside-on now to a rising sea and rolled in the trough of it.

Above the shouting and the crackle of

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the flames and the stamp of feet on iron decks and the thunder of the waves alongside, the Skipper's voice could be clearly heard shouting his orders. He seemed cooler than any one as he paced from end to end of the narrow bridge and watched the falls cleared and the davits swung outward one by one.

It was not until the six boats took the water that it was noticed he held a revolver in his hand. He did not raise it; but he stood sharply outlined like a silhouette against a column of glowing smoke, and he held it in such a way that every man could see it.

"Stand back, you! And you!" he ordered, as several of the firemen made a concerted rush to be first over the side, and they stopped on the instant, for there was a hint of murder in his voice.

Then he made them line up along the deck and divided them by eights and assigned an officer to every eight, and then, but not till then, he gave them leave to swarm down the life-lines into the waiting boats and pull clear of the ship.

Billy found himself in O'Hanlon's boat with seven Dago firemen; the firemen sat crosswise on the thwarts and Billy lay backward in the bow with one elbow on the gunwale on each side; O'Hanlon, on the stern seat, sat with the tiller in his hand and stared at the burning vessel, letting the boat drift with the wind and tide away from her.

Then suddenly there came a lull—not silence, but a change of sound that had the immediate effect of silence—and a column of flame shot up from the steamer's hold like a geyser, followed by a thundering crash that seemed to shake the universe and set the sea boiling for fifty yards around. Then the poor old tramp *Diogenes* heaved up another holocaust of flame and smoke and sparks—shook herself from end to end, lurched, and then parted, plate by plate, and sank in a seething turmoil of black water! And all was darkness, with the shrill piping of the Skipper's whistle calling from somewhere in the distance.

"Give way there!" said O'Hanlon, sitting round and facing his Dago crew; and it was only by an obvious effort that he could tear his eyes away from the boiling grave of the ship he had fought so furiously to save. Billy stayed where he was, leaning backward, face upward, in the bow, and for the time being the engineer ignored him.

THEY found the Skipper's boat, and he gave them their direction—due westward—for the shore and ordered each boat to look out for itself; then, as the boats got under way for the long pull to shelter, one of O'Hanlon's firemen caught a tremendous crab and sprawled backward between the thwarts. While he was recovering, O'Hanlon peered ahead and noticed Billy.

"Blain!" he bellowed, "what's wrong with you? Take an oar and row wi' the rest o' them, d'ye hear me?"

"Not me!" said Billy. "I didn't sign on to do no rowing! Let these here Dagoes do it!"

"D'ye hear me?" said O'Hanlon, rather more calmly this time. "Get up and take an oar!"

"Dunno how!"

"Then learn, —— ye! Or I'll come up forrard there an' teach ye in a way ye won't like!"

Billy saw him rise to carry out the threat, and he knew better than to disobey; but though he had grown used long ago to O'Hanlon's discipline, and as a rule did not even mind it nowadays, he felt differently about it this time.

So far as he was concerned, the two were no longer friends; he had been called a coward and a cur, and he had been struck—treated, in fact, like a Dago. He obeyed orders now because he had to, and not because he liked O'Hanlon. And the compulsory obedience widened the breach between them and made it more unbridgable. He crawled on to the front thwart as leisurely as he dared and drew an oar toward him and fixed his thole-pins in—and waited.

"Now pull, and put some Samson in it!"

"Catch me going to sea with you again!" growled Billy, dipping his oar in clumsily.

"Wait till I invite ye!" retorted O'Hanlon. "Quit talking now and work! Take your time from the man in front of ye—now then—pull! One—two—three! Keep that up now!"

Billy pulled and presently his pride returned to him; he saw the Dagoes rowing badly, but better by a mile than he could row, and it was part of his unalterable creed that nobody of less than twice his weight could beat him at anything he laid his hand to. So he began to put his heart into it and study methods, and soon O'Hanlon left off swearing at him and all eight men

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began to pull evenly together and the boat made headway finely.

Billy rowed then and rowed and rowed until every fiber in his system ached; he had met a new kind of exercise that he was unaccustomed to. Before long every bone in his body cracked, and then ceased to crack from very weariness; his blistered hands burned as though fire had scorched them; his eyes swam and bright lights seemed to stream past them on either side, and his temples throbbed like the drumming of an engine-room.

He stuck to it, though, for he would rather die at any time than own himself beaten at any game by a Dago; and as he rowed he cursed O'Hanlon by all the devils of the fighting-man's underworld — prayed fervently that he might fight on an empty stomach against opponents of twice his weight, and wished him other evils that are known to and dreaded by fighting men, until, nine or ten hours later, when the sun was high up in the heavens and the rowers' heads were splitting with the heat of it, the boat's keel grounded on a shingle beach and the weary crew tumbled over the side into the water and dragged her up high and dry.

O'Hanlon leaned against the boat and looked at Billy, grinning as he noted his utter weariness.

"That'll put some muscle on ye, ye little runt!" he remarked.

"If it had made me strong enough to lick the stuffing out o' you, you —— Irishman, I'd do it now!" growled Billy.

"Ye'll get over that feeling!" said O'Hanlon. "Ye'll like me again yet!"

"Will I?" answered Billy scornfully. "I'm through with you! From now on I'm my own manager, and I'll handle my own money. All you're fit for's bossing Dagoes! Where are we?"

"Near Charleston."

"Can you pay me my money there?"

"Sure!" said O'Hanlon.

"Good!" said Billy. "Then good-by, and good riddance!"

"Ye durned little runt!" exclaimed O'Hanlon, not at all ill-humoredly.

III

EITHER O'Hanlon had driven his crew more fiercely than the others had, and he had outdistanced them, or else the other boats had taken a slightly different course, for the engineer's boat seemed to have reached the shore alone, and the sea, so far as the eye could reach, was empty. O'Hanlon sat on the gunwale of the boat and sucked his pipe for a few minutes, while the crew sprawled on the beach and rested; then he pocketed his pipe and ordered them back into the boat again. But he had reckoned without the crew, or Billy's temper.

The crew, being no longer on board ship, no longer feared to disobey him, and they drew all together in a little bunch and in two languages and five different dialects expressed their preference for death in almost any form to the prospect of rowing so much as another yard for Chief-engineer O'Hanlon.

"And as for me," added Billy, when the rest had done, "I won't take no more orders from you anyhow!"

"Walk, then, and be —— to you!" said O'Hanlon, and he started off alone along the beach.

Billy walked along behind him with his hands in his hip-pockets, and behind him trudged the other firemen, still carrying their oars—apparently as a protection against O'Hanlon's wrath. Billy looked the least shabby, for he was the only one who had a jacket on; the rest looked just what they were—jetsam.

They trudged for about five miles before they came in sight of Charleston; then Billy drew closer to O'Hanlon and lessened the distance gradually until he walked beside him. Then O'Hanlon stopped and faced him.

"Go and walk wi' your pals!" he growled.

"They're no more my pals than you are!" retorted Billy. "Is that Charleston on ahead?"

"It is."

"How soon can I get my money—any money, I mean?"

"I've twenty-five dollars in my belt," said the engineer; "ye can have ten o' them. But why trouble about money? I'll see about your board until the Skipper turns up."

"Not if I know it!" answered Billy. "I've had enough o' you! Gimme the ten!"

O'Hanlon undid his belt and extracted two five-dollar bills from the little roll he had; Billy took them and fell to the rear again. Then they trudged on once more until they reached the city, when O'Hanlon stopped again.

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"You'd better stop at Ted Slick's," he told Billy, "you and the rest; I'll show you where it is."

"I'm not stoppin' wi' no Dagoes!" answered Billy.

"Well, then, you stop there and let the rest go somewhere else. I want to know where ye are, to pay ye that money when it comes. I'll be at Turner's, three blocks away."

"All right," said Billy, "lead on!"

Ted Slick's turned out to be an awful-looking joint when at last they reached it. It was an old house, wedged in between two even older ones, with long wooden benches placed on either side of the front door, and on the benches sat and sprawled the raggedest, dirtiest, most decrepit-looking mob of one-time mariners that Billy, or for that matter anybody else, had ever seen.

But O'Hanlon stopped and pointed to the doorway; so Billy entered, stopping for a moment, though, to make sure that the other firemen followed the engineer along the street. There was a negro seated on the end of one of the benches nearest to the doorway.

"Fine mawnin', boss!" he drawled, as Billy entered.

"Ur-r-r-r!" growled Billy, unaffectionately, but the negro rose and followed him.

INSIDE the gloomy old hallway, placed cornerwise across the farthest end of it, was a wooden counter labeled OFFICE; and behind the counter, seated so low that his bald head barely showed above it, sat a shabby, dirty, disheveled-looking old man, who looked up and glared at Billy as though he were an intruder.

"This Ted Slick's?" demanded Billy.

The old man nodded, and looked above his black-rimmed spectacles at the negro, who came up beside Billy and leaned his elbow on the counter.

"Reckon he's a boahder, boss," explained the negro in a lazy drawl.

"Dollar a day—bed an' board!" snapped the old man. "Any dunnage?"

"No," said Billy.

"Ante up, then!" snapped the ancient.

Billy pulled out one of his two five-dollar bills, and the old man squinted at it cautiously before placing it in a box behind him.

"Good for five nights!" he snapped. "Show him a bed, George!"

"Nix on that!" said Billy; "gimme my change! One night here'll do me!"

"Got no change!" snapped the ancient. "Show him a bed, George!"

"Come on, boss," drawled George, "he always treats sailors jest that way. Ted Slick's all right; he'll give you youah change befoh you leave; that's a little way he has with sailors, that's all, case they do damages."

"I'm no sailor!" said Billy angrily.

"Heah that, boss? Says he ain't no sailor."

"What's he want here then?" snapped the ancient. "Show him up, or tell him to get out o' here!"

"Here you! Gimme four dollars change, d'ye hear?" demanded Billy, his temper rising.

The old man looked up again and eyed him carefully for half a minute.

"No sailor?" he snapped at last. "No dunnage?" He paused and spat reflectively. "Paid five dollars, did ye? You'll get your change to-morrow! Show him a bed, George!"

"Come on, boss," said George, "he's always that way; he's all right, I tell yoh; this way up!"

Billy, angry though he was, felt too tired and too anxious to lie down and sleep to argue any further, so he followed the negro up a flight of stairs and into a room where a row of beds was arranged down either side.

"How's this suit yoh?" asked the negro, pointing to a bed.

"Well enough for one night!" answered Billy, sitting on it and beginning already to pull his shoes off. "Get out o' here now, and let me sleep!"

The negro started to leave the room, but turned again when he reached the doorway and looked in a calculating way at Billy.

"Say boss," he said, "yoh don't look like no sailor; yoh look moh like a fireman, you do!"

"Do I?" snarled Billy; "well, if it suits your woolly head to know it, I'm a prize-fighter, and if I get any more of your —— impertinence, I'll prove it to you on your bean!"

"Yoh a fist-fighter, eh?" exclaimed the negro. "Well, boss, that shoah is fortunate!"

"Git!" said Billy, picking up his shoe and making as if to hurl it; "get out o' here and let me sleep!"

"Ah'm goin', boss; ah'm goin'!" said the

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negro, and he went off down the stairs again, chuckling.

WHEN Billy awoke at six the following morning he was disgusted to discover that the negro George was occupying the bed next to him. The darky sat up in bed, yawned like an earthquake, and cast a quick, leery, half-suspicious glance at Billy.

"Mawnin', boss," he drawled; "you feelin' bettah?"

"I'm feelin' well enough to lick the stuffing out o' you!" said Billy. "Get out o' here!"

"Hah-hah!" grinned the darky, smiling all over his ebony face, "that's good news, that is, boss. That shoah is money in your pocket, boss! Boss, if you feel that way so early in the mawnin', you shoah will feel dandy by to-night! Thah's a niggah in this city, boss, that reckons he can take down youah number; he's got fifty dollahs that say he can. Down heah in South Ca'linah we're plumb crazy about fightin'; there'll be more'n half Charleston heah to-night, boss, to see you lick that niggah—there shohly will!"

"I don't fight coons!" said Billy contemptuously.

"This won't be a fight, this'll be easy money, boss! This heah niggah I done told you about, he jes' 'lows he can fight, that's all. He's jes' a no 'count niggah, that's all; but he's got fifty dollahs, boss. It'll be jes' like takin' candy from a kid!"

"I don't take candy from kids, or fight coons either! Get out o' here!" said Billy.

"Ah'll go an' fetch him," said George; "Ah'll being him heah, boss, so's you can look him over."

The darky leaped out of bed and drew on his ragged garments; then he ran downstairs and disappeared without any further argument. Five minutes later Billy followed him down-stairs, to loaf in the sunshine until breakfast-time and revel in the early morning air, as only a man in the pink of condition knows how to do.

One by one the other occupants of the boarding-house loafed out, looked half-suspiciously at Billy, and took up their usual places; that seemed to have become a fixed habit with most of them. They either sat down on the benches or leaned with their backs against the wall or stood close by the doorway in destitute-looking groups; there were maybe fifty of them, all told.

George, the negro, came back presently, accompanied by another negro of about Billy's weight, but rather taller.

"Heah's the niggah, boss!" he exclaimed, grinning; "he 'lows he can lick the stuffin' out o' you! You got yoh money, niggah?" he demanded, turning to his companion.

The newcomer produced a roll of filthy greenbacks, and George took them and counted them officiously, while the other negro and Billy stood and eyed each other critically, much as a butcher might eye a steer he is about to kill.

"He looks easy enough to me!" thought Billy. "Can't do it, though—won't do. Got to draw the line! No coons for me!"

He felt half tempted, though; he thought he would like to win some sort of fight, and win some money, even if only fifty dollars, just after breaking with O'Hanlon. He beat down the temptation, however.

"Take him away!" he exclaimed contemptuously, when George looked up from counting out the bills.

"G'wan! You shohly ain't skeered o' *him?*" said George.

There was a chorus of laughter from the hangers-on around the door, and two or three groups of men closed in to listen further.

"Take him away, George!" sneered one of them. "The prize-fighter's afraid! You called his bluff pretty quick, I reckon!"

Another outburst of laughter followed that sneer, and several more of the group of idlers clustered round. Billy found himself completely surrounded.

"Why, he don't even look like a fighter!" said another man.

"Don't I?" retorted Billy angrily. "You come out here an' try me! Put your fists up, an' see what you get!"

"I'm not lookin' for a fight! Fight *him!* He's brought his money with him like a sport, an' wants to fight; you're afraid of him, that's all!"

"Yah! You're afraid!" said George and his fellow black in chorus, and once more the group joined in mocking laughter.

"Afraid, am I?" Billy stepped up to the challenger and seized him by the lapel of his coat. "'Fraid o' you, am I? Now—say it again!"

The negro raised his hands to ward off the expected blow, and Billy, mistaking the movement for a threat, stepped back one

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pace—all fight on the instant. The coon's eyes blazed and Billy crouched, and then "Shame!" called some one, and the crowd of sailors and hangers-on surged in between them and interfered.

"Put up your money like a man! Shame! Fight him in the ring like a good sport! Go on! He's afraid, that's what's the matter; he's a coward! Wants to fight out here, where the go 'ud be stopped 'fore he got hurt!"

IT WAS foolish of Billy, and in his heart of hearts he knew it; but it was the word "coward" that nettled him into taking up the challenge. His early training in the slums of London had made him too hot-headed and quick-tempered for him to really realize that a charge of cowardice, levied by a loafing gang like that, was rather a compliment than otherwise; he had sense enough to realize it afterward, but his training had taught him to be quick with his resentment. For a second he still hesitated.

"All right," he said. "Who's going to hold the money?"

"Oh, you Slick!" called half a dozen men. "Ted Slick! Slick ahoy! You're wanted!"

The Cerberus of the night before came toddling out, active enough for all his age and the wizened look that made him seem more like a monkey than a man.

"What's doin'?" he demanded.

"Here! Take this! Fifty dollars! This coon here backs himself for fifty to beat the Englishman!"

Slick seized the bills and counted them.

"Where's yours?" he demanded, squinting into Billy's face. "I got four o' yours; where's the rest?"

"I'll bring it in an hour," said Billy.

"Got any on you?" snapped the ancient.

"Only five."

"Give it here!" He held out his hand with an impatient gesture, and Billy, already beginning to regret his haste, gave him his other five-dollar bill.

"That makes nine! You owe forty-one; go and get it! Quick now!"

"Plenty o' time!" said Billy. "I'll fetch it after breakfast."

"You'd better!" said Ted Slick dryly. "What's the coon's name? Stubbs, isn't it? Abraham Lincoln Stubbs? They're all Lincolns or else George Washingtons! What's your name?" he asked Billy.

"Blain."

"What Blain? Chilblain, or Bill Blain, or what kind o' Blain?"

"Bill Blain."

"Oh, Boil an' Blain! All right! Boil an' Blain fights Abe Lincoln Stubbs to-night—fifty a side—no limit—fight to a finish—nine o'clock sharp in my barn. Boil an' Blain's forty-one shy this minute, an' got two hours to pay!"

And the little monkey-looking man toddled off back to his "office" again, and resumed his reading of yesterday's paper as though nothing of the slightest interest had happened.

Billy noticed that the negro named George sat at the same table as he did at breakfast, and that he left the table at the same time, and followed him outside. He thought little of it, though, and it certainly did not occur to him that he was being watched.

"Where's Turner's?" he demanded, turning and facing the negro suddenly.

"——! boss, I shoh did think yoh was goin' to hit me! Hah-Hah! I'll show you where Turner's is; follow me!"

Billy followed him for a matter of four blocks, and then espied the Skipper and O'Hanlon sitting in long cane chairs on the veranda of a decent-looking boarding-house. They both saw him, but neither of them hailed him, and when he left the negro at the gate and started up the bit of a gravel drive, they both stared coldly at him.

"Your money hasn't come yet," said O'Hanlon, before Billy had reached the steps even; "I've wired New York, and when the draft comes I'll let ye know."

"I want a hundred now," said Billy, advancing up the steps.

"What for?" asked the engineer.

"Stakes. I told you I'd manage myself in future; I've a fight on already!"

"I haven't got a hundred. I told ye I'd only five-and-twenty when we landed, and ye've had ten of it."

"I've got it," said the Skipper. "Shall I give it to him, Terence?"

"Suit yourself," said the engineer.

The Skipper disappeared into a room behind, and Billy and O'Hanlon stared at each other, Billy standing and uncomfortable—O'Hanlon seated and very much at ease. The Skipper gave Billy his hundred dollars and took his receipt for it and dismissed him with a nod; but as Billy walked out

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through the gate again and the negro joined him the Skipper leaned forward and stared after him.

"Have you seen that coon before, Terence?" he asked.

"I have!" said O'Hanlon.

"Know him?"

"I do. He's known as George. God knows what his other name is. He's one of Ted Slick's hangers-on—crimp's runner—police stool-pidgeon—and all around bad hat! Billy'll be in bad, if we don't make a move."

"Let's make it!" said the Skipper promptly. "I like that boy!"

"So do I like him!" said O'Hanlon. "The durned little runt don't like me, though! I'll go and round up some o' the crew and send 'em round to Slick's to make inquiries."

THAT night at nine o'clock the big dark barn behind Ted Slick's boarding-house was packed from wall to wall with a motley crowd of men, by far the most of whom were negroes. There was little noise inside, but an underhum of whispered conversation filled the place and made the sea of coal-black faces, dimly outlined by the stinking oil lamps, seem even weirder.

There was no stage; but in the center of the barn was an enclosure, roughly and irregularly roped off, longer on one side than on the others, and carpeted with ragged matting; this was the "ring" where Billy was to "take the candy from a kid."

There was no noise to speak of, even when Abraham Lincoln Stubbs came in and crawled between the ropes into the ring; no stool had been provided for him, so he stood and leaned his back against the ropes and stared around him, smiling every now and then as he caught sight of an acquaintance in the gloom.

In the six front rows on one side of the ring were the white spectators—sailors nearly all of them—and in the middle of the front row of all, seated on a chair that was raised considerably higher than the rest, was Ted Slick himself, looking more like a monkey-man than ever.

He kept squinting over and through his spectacles at the crowd on every side of him, and he checked each outburst of enthusiasm the moment it began by rising in his chair and glaring in the direction of the sound. He was evidently a man who knew how to enforce his wishes.

When Billy entered there was no attempt at a demonstration, but one negro laughed. It was the only sound that greeted Billy, and it sent a chill through him, so that he felt nervous for the first time in his life when entering a ring. He still had complete confidence in his own ability, but the blackness on every side of him and the rustling and whispering and the uncanny atmosphere of secrecy that seemed even more characteristic of the place than the fetid atmosphere made him feel almost frightened. And he missed O'Hanlon in his corner more than he cared to own. The engineer's advice was always useless, and generally given at the wrong time, but his friendship and enthusiasm were worth ten pounds in weight to any man.

Billy's second on this occasion was a decrepit sailor who owed a board-bill to Ted Slick and who had been forced into the service; he was quite incompetent, but Billy was not troubled overmuch on that score; he expected to wipe up his opponent very quickly and to need very little nursing through the battle. What did trouble him was the condition of the floor.

The matting was torn in several places and rotten everywhere. He slipped through the ropes and tested it in several places with his foot, and he discovered that the boarding underneath the matting was rotten, too; it gave here and there to his tread, and in more than one place a plank-butt stood slightly raised above the level of the plank it was meant to meet and formed a nasty ridge that a man might trip against.

After studying the battle-ground for half a minute, he realized more than ever that his best course would be to make a whirlwind battle of it and finish it in one round if he could.

There was an iron pail in front of Ted Slick, and suddenly he smote it three times with a tack-hammer and called for silence, and during the ten seconds that followed before he spoke Billy could hear the old man's watch tick—six yards at least away from him! The whole house waited in absolute, dead stillness until he chose to speak.

"Now then," he said at last, "step to the center, you two! London prize-ring rules—three-minute rounds unless a man goes

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down—one minute between each round. Are ye ready?"

"London rules be ——!" said Billy. "Queensbury for me."

"Comes from London, and don't want London rules!" said Slick. "He's a nice 'un, ain't he?"

A roar of laughter rose and changed the silence into turmoil.

"Silence!" bellowed Slick, striking his iron pail, and once more a pin could have been heard to drop.

"London prize-ring rules!" he said again. "Money's posted! Fight or forfeit! Are ye ready?"

"Go on!" said Billy, seeing the uselessness of argument.

For a second the two men faced each other under the glare of the big brass lamp that hung suspended from a bent wire overhead and added its quota to the already stifling heat. Billy still wore overalls, and he looked neither handsome nor imposing, but the negro, who was stripped to the waist, shone like polished ebony, and from the way he stood and from the play of the muscles underneath his glistening skin Billy knew that he had an experienced antagonist to deal with. But he thought he detected signs of sweating already, and he was certain of a layer of fat just below the negro's ribs; so he began to feel more confident again.

"TIME!" said Ted Slick suddenly, striking the iron pail with his hammer.

The negro led off lightly, and Billy guarded the blow and stood his ground; he had very little fancy for the notion of retreating from a negro, and he meant to force the fighting; he waited, though, for a second, hoping to catch the black man off his guard.

The negro led off again, and once more Billy guarded; then he ducked and sent in a smashing punch to where he had spied that ridge of fat below his opponent's ribs. The negro wilted and curled up, still standing, but clutching and holding on, and a howl went up through the hall that even Ted Slick was hard put to it to quell.

"Foul!" roared a hundred voices. "Foul! Foul! Throw him out of the ring! Scrag him!"

"Silence!" roared Slick, hammering at his pail.

"That the gong?" asked Billy. "Is it time, or is he out, or what?"

"Silence!" yelled Slick again, almost beside himself with rage. "Silence!—or I'll stop the fight!"

The din died down, and Billy wrestled with the negro, trying to throw him off and get him far enough away to punch. But the negro held on gamely, and Billy shoved him backward round and round the ring in his efforts to free himself. Then suddenly the black man tripped in a hole in the rotten matting and fell full length on his back and lay there.

"Round one!" said Ted Slick, hammering his gong.

Billy's second pushed a wooden box through the ropes for him to sit on, but he proffered no further assistance of any kind. So Billy sat down on the box and waited for the call of time again, and watched two negroes working over his antagonist. There was no sound from the benches; the whole house watched in silence, and there was nothing to listen to but the sound of heavy breathing. Slick waited for at least two minutes, to give the negro plenty of time to get his wind back, before he struck his pail again.

He did strike it, though, at last, and Billy walked into the center fully determined to make this round the last one; he realized there would be no fair play in this fight, and that his best chance to succeed was to succeed at once, before his adversary could play a trick on him. So he forced the fighting from the start, rushing at the negro as he neared the center, sparring for a second with a lightning rapidity that bewildered him, and then sending in another smashing blow to the place below the ribs that was already tender from his attentions in the first round.

"Foul!" roared the house again; and this time the cries were louder and more determined and more prolonged, and this time Ted Slick seemed to be making less effort to quell the noise. He did nothing, though, and gave no decision. The negro clutched at Billy and hung on, and Billy leaned on him and pounded at his kidneys; the negro pulled, trying to back away, then suddenly he ducked a little—placed his head in Billy's stomach—and rushed him, bearing him backward across the ring.

Billy was nearly off his feet, but just as he reached the ropes in his corner of the ring he recovered sufficiently to get home two rousing upper-cuts to the negro's face that

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had the effect of stopping him, and for another second the negro hung on again and the two men struggled against the ropes. Then Billy's second leaned between the ropes and hit him with a black-jack behind the ear, and the fight was over!

JUST at that second, as Billy's knees gave way and he tottered and tumbled to the mat, the big doors at the end of the barn burst open and O'Hanlon and the Skipper stood in the doorway, facing Ted Slick and the excited house.

"Did ye see that?" asked O'Hanlon. "Come on, Skipper, and take him out o' this!"

He sprang on the back bench and the Skipper followed him, and the two men made for the ring in standing jumps, leaping over the heads of close-packed negroes and knocking down any that opposed them. One man rose from his seat and seized the Skipper's leg; O'Hanlon kicked him in the face and sent him spinning.

Next it was O'Hanlon's turn; a negro seized him round the waist and brought him to the floor between the benches with a crash—only to release his hold when the Skipper jumped on him. Then the two men sprang on a bench again and plunged into the crowd in front of them, leaping and kicking and hitting right and left; and in less than half a minute from the time they entered they were in the ring and O'Hanlon was bending over Billy.

"Poor little runt!" he said. "They've nearly killed him!"

"Not dead?" said the Skipper. "Good! Get out o' this!" he swore, springing at the man, who was still in the middle of the ring.

He seized him by the waist and flung him whirling over the heads of the first two rows of spectators. Then the real fight started, and it was a typhoon of a fight while it lasted.

"Will ye stand that, boys?" demanded Slick, pitching his shrill voice into an angry scream. "Chuck 'em out, d'ye hear me! Chuck 'em out!"

The crowd rushed in to carry out his orders, and the Skipper and O'Hanlon received them back to back, guarding the unconscious Billy in between them.

Against a man of his own weight, in a twenty-four foot ring, O'Hanlon might possibly have made poor showing, but as an all-in—fists and feet and back and elbows—fighter there were few to equal him from Nova Scotia to the Horn; he had fought mutinous crews in every kind of climate and situation at every port all up and down the coast and in between them; and he had put in some extra fighting in between times for his own amusement.

He simply reveled in a row, and he fought now as though he liked it. The Skipper was of a more phlegmatic turn of mind; he had been brought up in the same school as O'Hanlon so far as fighting went, handling shanghaied seamen as a mate on sailing ships; but he took less kindly to it as a sport. He was more for getting the thing over in a hurry. As a combination the two men were invincible, and the first oncoming rush of mingled blacks and whites went down before them almost like skittles.

Down went the ropes, and the matting of the ring was wrenched and dragged into a heap by struggling feet. O'Hanlon stooped and seized a plank-butt that projected an inch above the others; then, exerting all his strength, he ripped at it, and the plank cracked and lifted and came away. He had a weapon then—a six-foot, jagged, lithesome weapon, and he kept it cracking on the heads of negroes until a space was cleared around him and there was breathing-space again. Then he glared round him once, noting the diminished numbers in the hall.

"Pick him up, Skip!" he bellowed. "I'll clear the road!"

THE Skipper laid Billy on his shoulder, keeping one big hairy fist free for contingencies, and O'Hanlon leaped from bench to bench in front of him, driving the remnants of the crowd before him till he reached the doorway. There things looked bad again; a dozen darkies, tougher-looking than the rest, waited there and elected to make a stand. O'Hanlon rushed at them, bellowing with fury, and brought his plank-butt crashing down on the heads of the nearest of them.

Three times he hit, and the plank-butt broke; then he charged in with his fists, lunging with the power of a pile-driver and sending the men he hit crashing backward. But six of them closed in on him and seized his arms and three more seized his legs, and before the Skipper could

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drop Billy and intervene to help him he had gone to the floor in a kicking, punching, bellowing, bleeding holocaust of legs and arms and torsos.

Then some one yelled "Police!" and the darkies ran, and O'Hanlon rose and wiped his face and looked at the wreck around him.

"Skip, my boy," he said, when he had got his breath back, "that was a jewel of a fight! How's Billy?"

"He's coming round," said the Skipper. "Let's carry him outside."

Out in the good fresh air Billy revived almost immediately, and he was able to walk between them to Turner's boarding-house. O'Hanlon chuckled nearly all the way, between intervals of wiping the blood from his face, and he seemed to have completely forgotten Billy's quarrel with him of the day before. When they reached the house he put Billy in a chair and brought him brandy.

"Are ye feelin' better now?" he asked.

"Feelin' better two ways," said Billy.

"How d'ye mean—two ways?"

"Feelin' better about you, too! I mean I'm sorry!"

"Oh, that! We're both too fond o' fightin' not to like each other, son! Shake!"

Billy held his hand out and set his teeth while O'Hanlon squeezed it.

"Goin' back to New York soon?"

"To-morrow, my son. I'm thinkin' o' leavin' the sea for good! I'd like to find a real good fightin' man and manage him."

"Try me again!" said Billy. "I'm game."

"You'll do!" said O'Hanlon. "But no more fights wi' coons, mind! Unless I give you leave to break it, you'll draw the color-line!"

A Soft Answer from the Kid

by Willett Stockard

THE Kid had announced his arrival at Mesa by a pyrotechnic exhibition that, to say the least, was a trifle unusual.

He had sat in his room at the Holman House and amused himself by firing at the chimney of the hotel across the street, until Holman himself came up and ordered him to leave.

The Kid moved his belongings over to the hotel opposite and consoled himself by shooting the shingles off the roof of his former place of abode, and at last the patient Dutchman who was the proprietor of the latter came and begged him to return.

But even in Mesa and even at that time, which was a number of years ago, a time

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in which there occurred things inconceivable to-day, there was strong sentiment against all unnecessary violation of the law.

In all cases in which a man had private matters to attend to, there was, of course, some leniency shown him. Needless and promiscuous shooting, however, constituted a serious offense.

For a stranger, a rank tenderfoot, to come into town and proceed to shoot it up in such a nonchalant, dispassionate manner, openly and without any attempt to get away later—the idea seemed preposterous!

But for the fact that the Sheriff and all of the other officers had not returned from the pursuit of a band of horse-thieves, the Kid would have been subdued and locked up at the beginning of his outbreak.

As it was, the Sheriff hurried around to the hotel immediately upon his return about noon the following day, aroused the Kid from a deep slumber and placed him under arrest despite his statement that he was a very sick man.

His trial came off that same afternoon, and from that time on the Kid was one of Mescal's most widely known residents.

TO BEGIN with, he was let off with as light a fine as possible under the circumstances, even the judge himself being surprised at his own leniency. The clemency of the court, however, did not meet with the least disapproval from any one of the spectators. The Kid had a personality, a frank, friendly, good-natured air about him, that it was impossible to resist.

He readily admitted his guilt, and said that he was perfectly willing to apologize. when he related the circumstances of the affair in a naive, straightforward manner that won over both the court and the others present.

He had just arrived in Mesa the previous day, the Kid stated. He was from the East, and had come West with strange ideas of the customs of the frontier country. He stated seriously that he had left the train at the station with the full expectation of being greeted with a volley of shots from the assembled cow-punchers, gamblers, outlaws and others of the kind whom he expected to find there waiting for the appearance of some tenderfoot.

Overcoming his surprise at their absence, he had gone to the Holman House to wait for them to come for him and put him through the initiation usually accorded tenderfoots, as he had read.

Upon being questioned, the Kid admitted that he had taken a few drinks of mescal to calm his nerves during the terrible suspense of waiting for them to come for him.

But in spite of that damaging bit of testimony, the prisoner was discharged upon the payment of the small fine imposed, after which he was led away by Big Lyle Gibbs and others who comprised Mesa's younger, more reckless element. The Kid's popularity among them was established at the celebration he gave in honor of his release.

BEFORE the end of the week the Kid knew and had become known by practically everybody in the entire section. He had a knack of meeting people, mingling with them, making friends with them. There was nothing unduly forward in his manner, yet in a short time he was using for every one the name by which he was commonly called.

"Hello, Uncle Billy," or "How're they coming, Big Mac?" he would greet them, and follow that with some inquiry about their affairs, "How's your little girl that was sick?" or "What did you do with that heifer yearling of yours that got cut up on the wire last week?"

And it was not in an idle, superficial manner that he questioned them. He took a genuine interest in the people and all that concerned them, and made friends with them as a matter of course. He liked them sincerely, just as they speedily came to like him, even the oldest among them. The grim-faced veterans of the plain were not demonstrative, but had it been necessary there was little they would not have done for him.

From the beginning, the lawless, careless crowd led by Big Lyle took the Kid as their especial charge. They tried out all of the initiatory tactics of the West, the various games, contests, tricks and the like, which tenderfoots have been the victims of, probably ever since the second man to come westward met up with the first one. Some of them the Kid held aloof from, for he was wise and quick to divine their outcome; upon others, however, he was fairly caught, and joined the rest in laughing at himself.

Then, when there remained no more or-

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deals for him to undergo, Big Lyle and others of his crew completed the Kid's education by personal instruction.

One Saturday night, when almost everybody seemed in unusually good spirits, Lyle called him from the Holman House, and led him away into the darkness a hundred yards behind the row of little stores that formed Mesa's principal street.

"I'm goin' to learn you how to shoot up a town in the proper manner, Kid," Lyle told him.

The two were joined by half a dozen forms that came softly out of the darkness. There was a short conference, after which the group separated, each two men going in different directions. The Kid followed Big Lyle to a spot a short distance away. After waiting for five minutes or more Big Lyle drew forth his gun, and the Kid followed his example.

"When I give the word, Kid, cut loose with her," the former commanded, and then after a slight pause he went on,

"Get ready now—all right—let 'er go!"

The six shots from each sounded as if they were a volley from at least a dozen guns.

As the last shot was fired, the Kid wheeled and followed Lyle, who had started away on a dead run. The two sped on for a hundred yards or more, and at last reached a shallow ditch. They threw themselves down in it, and lay there for a moment, breathing heavily and without speaking.

A FEW seconds later they saw half a dozen men, peace-officers who had come from the barber-shops and saloons, rush toward the place from which the shots had come.

But by the time they reached it there came a crackling volley from another part of town several hundred yards away.

The officers at once changed their course, part of them continuing in the new direction of the firing, part of them hurrying back to the street to get their horses, while Lyle and the Kid chuckled to themselves.

"They think it's just two or three of us, an' that we're on hossback," the former explained. "They'll simply run their fool heads off tryin' to get track of us."

There came another sound of firing from a remote part of town, and a few moments later still another.

"Fill up again, Kid, an' we'll give them brave officers one more salute as a testermonial of our love an' respect."

Once more they fired six times each, and dashed away, this time back to the hotel.

"Now that's the reg'lar, polite way to shoot up a town," Lyle informed the Kid. "Yo' way was all right for a amateur, an' I admit it does save some exercise, but besides bein' ruther expensive, it ain't considered etiquette an' it don't show the proper respect for the officers."

There were numerous other matters in which the Kid was thoroughly grounded. He was an apt student. In a short time there was no one, not even Lyle himself, who could teach him anything further.

And in the meantime his popularity increased, if that were possible. At any event, before the end of his first year in Mesa he had more friends and fewer enemies and was more highly thought of than any one else in the county.

By that time every one knew the reason of his coming there and why he stayed. He had been exiled to Mesa by his father, in order to prevent him from marrying a girl to whom there was strong parental objection. The Kid had taken his banishment good-naturedly, as was his habit of taking everything, and from his appearance no one would have thought that his heart was being eaten away by thoughts of the girl from whom he had been separated.

As a matter of fact, the girl occupied very little place in his thoughts. He had not heard from her in weeks, and had not written her in months. But when he received word one day that she had married, he promptly decided that his life was wrecked.

Later in the evening he sat in the bar at the Holman House thinking over matters, alone and melancholic of appearance, as befitted a heart-broken man.

IT WAS this same evening that a delegation consisting of four of Rio's most prominent and disreputable citizens rode into town and entered the Holman House bar. They brought with them some shooting-irons, a grudge against Mesa in general and a strong determination to wipe out a portion of it. The latter part of their equipment was heralded in loud and forcible language, as they stood at the bar and looked over those in the room.

As it chanced, there was an unusually

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peaceable assembly there at the time. Big Lyle was the only one present who enjoyed the name of being an out-and-out fighting man. He was known to the men from Rio, who immediately began to address him with remarks of a keenly personal nature. Being a man of good judgment, Lyle made no remonstrance, gave them no excuse of any kind to open hostilities.

Finally, one of the Rio men, seeking to force some provocation for an engagement, made a movement to strike Big Lyle over the head with a revolver.

Instantly, the Kid slipped his gun from his side, with a yell to the other "Let him have it, Big Fellow!" and drew down upon the nearest of the quartet.

At the sound of his voice all four of them had turned toward him for an instant, which was long enough for Lyle to get into action. The report from his gun was a close second to the one from the Kid's.

After that the room was crammed jamful of shots and smoke, and the crash of splintering mirrors and breaking bottles and glasses.

The affair lasted for probably three seconds. The most conservative estimate of its duration made by any of those present placed it at five minutes, while others were not attempting to be facetious when they mentioned half an hour as being approximately the time taken up by the actual firing. One man who had taken refuge behind a leg of the pool-table came out with an inquiry as to what day of the week it was.

After everything had calmed down to some extent, two of the visiting gentlemen were borne away on a shutter for medical attention. The other half of the quartet had already departed in spirit—so hastily that they had neglected to take along their bodies, which now littered the floor and blotted the white squares of the tiling with reddish stuff.

Big Lyle was drilled through the hips by a bullet, and was compelled to drag himself about in a manner that resembled the progress of a broken-backed prairie-dog.

The Kid had received three wounds, although none of them was dangerous and all of them together were not serious enough to confine him to his room for more than a day or two.

He had received also the name of being a bad man, a gun-man, a killer, honors which he laughed at but which stuck to him.

TITLES of the kind, however, were not honorary, nor could they be held without being defended upon occasion. Now and then there came some one who wished to satisfy himself that the person bearing such honors did so deservingly. Then there were those who became imbued with a drunken desire to fight, and who frequently selected the one whose reputation as a bad man made him a shining mark.

So, in spite of the fact that the Kid was not of a quarrelsome nature, in spite of a lack of ambition on his part to figure as a gun-fighter, in spite of himself, he found that he was called upon to defend a name that he had no desire for in the first place.

However, he was not in the least backward wherever a fight was concerned. Those who were curious as to his rights to the honors given him were satisfied to the best of his ability, which usually was sufficient to satisfy the most doubtful. Those who made known a desire to mingle with Mesa's bad man did not have to express their wish a second time. Citizens of evil reputation from other towns who came into Mesa looking for trouble found it the instant they met up with the Kid, and so it went. In time it came to be that no shooting affair was considered complete unless the Kid was concerned in it in one way or another.

He could shoot, and was ready to at any time; he was as quick as any one on the draw, and he was not in the slightest degree afraid of any man he had ever met.

Yet to the people of his own community he was the same friendly, even-tempered, good-hearted youth, and was as popular as before.

All of the old-time residents who spoke of him said the same thing:

"He's another Prince Wayne, fellers—a reg'lar second Prince Wayne."

All of which was praise as high as any that could be bestowed in Mesa County.

For Prince Wayne had been the idol of Mesa and the surrounding territory for a number of years. He had been born and brought up there, and knew and was known by every man, woman and child for fifty miles around. He was as popular with the women and girls as he was with the men and boys, and was beloved by all of them.

He was much like the Kid in many re-

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spects. He was a manly, sunny-dispositioned boy, of a peaceful temper as a rule, but ready to fight on the instant in case a fight was necessary. He, too, had a reputation as a gun-man, and had been in numerous affrays. The outcome of the last of them was the cause of his abrupt departure from Mesa about three years before. He had gone somewhere down South-America way to a country in which there is no such word as "extradition."

He had been gone almost two years before the Kid had arrived in town, and it was over a year later before friends could patch up matters so that it was safe for him to return.

Under ordinary circumstances he and the Kid might have become the best of friends at once, for there were few traits they did not have in common, but their first meeting was under unfavorable auspices.

THE Kid was in Rio in attendance upon court when Wayne reached there on his way home. He breezed into the dining-room late one morning while the Kid was waiting for breakfast, and greeted the waitress in a facetious manner. When she inquired what he wished, he answered that she might kiss him, sing him a sentimental song and bring him some ham and eggs and a cup of coffee. He followed that with a line of airy conversation which kept the giggling waitress hovering about his table to the neglect of the only other guest in the room at the time.

The Kid endured the total lack of attention patiently and in silence for a moment or two. Then he made known some of his inmost thought, addressing no one in particular but speaking emphatically. Wayne diverted his attention, previously about equally divided between the waitress and his breakfast, toward the other.

They stared at each other for several seconds in silence, after which there was some pointed repartee, although there were no serious developments.

Still, the slight disagreement was sufficient to cause them to greet each other coolly when introduced at Mesa the day following. They kept up their air of cold politeness whenever they met afterward, until each came to disregard the other's presence entirely.

Although neither was of a jealous nature, it is possible that each could not help feeling a trifle piqued that the homage previously given him alone was now divided with a rival. Then, too, it may be that each conceived the idea that the other was seeking some excuse to settle the slight misunderstanding that had begun at their first meeting.

Neither had ever refused a similar wish on the part of any one else, so it came about that from indifference their attitude changed to extreme watchfulness.

And then one morning the Kid was informed that Wayne had expressed an intention of looking him up and proving that he was greatly overrated as a fighting man. The Kid's informant was a disreputable character named Slob Taylor, a man whom the Kid had befriended mainly because everybody else treated him with contempt. Taylor told the Kid other things of an uncomplimentary nature that Wayne had said of him. Then Taylor borrowed fifty cents, and went off to a saloon.

THE Kid went on into the one adjoining the hotel, and stood at the rear end of the bar engaged in conversation with Holman. Back of the bar and partly under it was a desk upon which were some papers and a revolver used as a paperweight. The Kid was leaning against the end of the counter eying the pistol curiously, when Wayne entered and came straight toward him.

The Kid was unarmed, having come down from his room a few minutes before without any thought of immediate trouble. However, he remained in the same position, and looked at the other unflinchingly.

"So you've been telling people I'm just a bluff and that you're the man to call me, have you?" Wayne demanded hotly, coming to a pause a few feet in front of the Kid. "And you've been saying that you were going to show me up good and proper, and I couldn't stay in the same town with you, eh?"

"Whoever told you that is a liar," returned the Kid, "and the same goes for anybody who repeats it after this."

While still leaning against the end of the bar, he had placed his hand carelessly behind it and grasped the revolver, which was out of the other's sight. Once the Kid gave it a cursory glance as he turned the cylinder with his fingers. In the meanwhile Wayne was continuing his remarks, his

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anger even increasing. Finally he blurted, "When it comes down to the truth, I'd back the man who told me against you any day!"

"Nobody's ever called me a liar yet and stuck to it!" the Kid came back instantly, equally as angry now as the other.

"Well, *I* will!" retorted Wayne, "and I'll make you acknowledge it yourself before I'm through with you, for I'm going to clean up with you right here and now, you contemptible——"

The Kid had straightened up, his hand still grasping the gun on the table back of the bar. It was still concealed from the other, but he must have sensed its presence. He made a movement for his own weapon.

Both of them were lightning quick; both of them drew at almost exactly the same instant. There was not more than the least part of a split second's difference between them, but that part was in the Kid's favor.

His revolver was leveled full in the other's face. Wayne realized that he was beaten, and allowed his gun to remain near his side. The bystanders had started forward, their muscles so tensely drawn that their shoulders were perceptibly elevated, all of them staring breathlessly at the Kid, all of them expectant.

But to the astonishment of all of them the Kid did not fire or make any effort to follow up his advantage.

Instead of the explosion and the crumpling of a body upon the floor—things that had always happened when the Kid was in a similar position—there were merely a few words from him in a quiet, even tone of voice.

"You're mistaken, Wayne," he said, "and I can convince you of it, I think, if you'll give me the chance, although I want you to take back several of those names you just mentioned.

"As far as what you say is concerned," he went on in the same low voice, "you can't find a man in town who'll believe that I said anything against you, and I'll prove to your own satisfaction that I didn't, if you'll just show me the man that said I did. I was told a number of things this morning that you'd said about me. I don't know if you did or——"

"I never said anything against anybody to his back in my life," Wayne put in.

"Neither have I," returned the Kid. "I'll take your word for it, and now we'll go to the bottom of this and straighten it out."

He turned and carelessly replaced the revolver upon the desk.

THEN, after a short consultation, he and Wayne went off together in search of Slob Taylor, whom they found drunk as usual. He tearfully admitted that he had lied to each one about the other, merely as a prelude to obtaining a small loan. Then he begged for forgiveness and the loan of another half-dollar.

From that time the friendship between Wayne and the Kid increased rapidly. In only a short while they were almost inseparable. The solicitous politeness with which they treated one another in the beginning speedily developed into an intimacy which permitted the exchange of expressions that a short time before would have precipitated bloody murder. They jollied each other unmercifully, swore at each other, quarreled, fought good-naturedly, roomed together, ate, drank and played poker together, and were as intimate as two friends could be.

Neither had ever referred to their unpleasantness in the Holman House bar, until Wayne brought up the subject one afternoon while they were lounging about in their room.

"Just to be honest, now, Kid," he remarked seriously, "how did you ever come to think of that soft-answer business that day of our run-in? You were in the right and I'd said some pretty tough things about you, and you had me beaten to the draw. If you'd run true to form, according to your reputation, you'd have filled me full of lead then and saved the soft-answer part of it for the funeral. That's the kind of reputation you've got, and from what I've learned of you myself, I must say you're not the fellow one would expect to hear any soft answers from, especially in a case like that. How'd you happen to do it, anyway?"

The Kid raised himself upon his elbow, and looked at the other with a broad grin.

"To tell the truth, Prince," he drawled, still grinning, "after I'd got my hand on that gun, why, I found out that the cussed thing wasn't loaded!"

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The Law of Bonham

By R. B. Kidd.

WE'D just picked up land when Captain Hayes come on deck.

"Here's Bonham," he said to th' mate, "one o' th' most beautiful spots in th' South Sea, but th' roughest of all th' ports where traders call. Hell gets into men when they stop on this atoll. Violence is th' only law that holds. Most of th' fights are over women, too. Oh! A man has to be strong to thrive on Bonham."

Th' *Leonora* had finished a long cruise, an' ev'ry man o' us felt eager for shore leave. 'Twas with rejoicin' we shoved off from th' brig that night, 'cause no matter how much a sailor liked th' sea he welcomed th' gay life to be met in a trading port. Th' first things as caught my notice was bright lights, an' shrill laughter o' women comin' from a large house standin' jus' off th' beach. I knowed right away they's from th' place I sought. A minute more, an' I entered Bonham's public resort. Good money we'd made from our cruise. I felt so fine over treadin' land once more that I wanted to start my fun by treatin' th' proprietor. Hardly had I put foot in th' room, afore a voice that sounded familiar sung out:

"Why! Charlie Williams, my old shipmate!"

Gettin' accustomed to th' glare, I recognized th' man walkin' eagerly toward me.

"Hello, Billy Hunter!" I exclaimed. "How come you here? Th' last time we met 'twas recruitin' labor in th' New Hebrides."

Something in his manner made me think as, maybe, he no longer made his livin' afloat.

"But you look like a landsman now," I added, grasping his hand.

"That's right. I've quit th' sea for good."

"What you doin' now?"

"I own this place."

"My!" I fairly gasped in surprise. "Then you must be gettin' rich fast. But how'd you, of all men, come for to settle down ashore?"

"Charlie, I owe all my prosperity to ——"

"Salvin' a wrecked whaler?"

"No! To a woman!"

"A what?"

This was sure strange talk from him, who'd been th' wildest devil among us.

"Oh! I savvy," I said, recoverin' a bit. "You mean you caught——"

"No, nothin' like o' that. I'm married honest an' square. It's made a man o' me, Charlie. I tell you, 'tis th' best life a fellow can follow."

"Bah!" an' I snapped my fingers. "I've had th' run o' women all over th' South Sea where they knows how to show a man what livin' is, but fur bein' tied down to only one, I don't see it."

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He smiled, jus' as if he knowed more things in life than what I did.

"I used for to talk like o' that, too, Charlie," he replied, "but I've learned better. Come over to th' house an' meet th' wife."

Leadin' th' way through a grove o' towerin' coconut-trees, he brung me to a pretty one-story cottage with a wide veranda, or *lanai*, extendin' along three sides. A whistle from Billy an' a woman walked through th' open door.

Now th' Bonham girls was noted as a handsome lot, an' I felt glad to get close acquainted with one. She come with a smile on her lips, but, seein' a stranger, drew back an' waited till Billy made me known. Then she hurried away to bring something in th' way o' refreshment, 'cause them natives used to act liberal toward new-found friends.

WE'D much to talk about—me an' Billy—for much had happened since we sailed together three years before. Yet I couldn't but find th' woman more interestin' 'an him. I kept watchin' her graceful-like way o' servin' us, for I wanted to size up th' sort o' woman who'd made a family man out o' th' desperate recruitin' agent I'd knowed. It wasn't alone her prettiness o' face or litheness o' form that pleased you. Of course she'd had to have all them points, for Billy only took up with women good to see, but 'twas more her gentle, careful-like way o' watchin' he had ev'rything to suit him, an' her seemin' happy when he acted pleased.

Th' girl had learned English pretty good, an' in her cute lingo she talked nice an' pleasant, an' told o' Billy's winnin' her after she'd nursed him out of a fever. Though I rough-joked him about some o' his earlier sweethearts, not one unkind word did she say, an' only once come there any show o' temper. This happened when Billy, startin' up, said:

"Suppose we step back to th' café. I'm expectin' Jaluit."

Then we heard a sharp exclamation, as a look o' reproach crossed her face, an' she darted away without so much as speakin' a word to me. Men gets to know their wives' ways an' th' meanin' o' their little looks, 'cause Billy laughed quietly as we recrossed th' grove, an' he said:

"Haumea thinks Jaluit is too hard a drinker an' leads me into th' heavy-goin' ways you an' I used to steer. But he's th' Chief here an' I've got to stand in with him."

Billy spoke true about prosperin'. In addition to his cottage, he owned five acres on th' beach front an' ran th' biggest resort in Bonham. A sweep o' th' eyes showed white men an' native men an' women crowdin' about th' many tables. With th' whalin' an' tradin' fleets callin' regular, 'twas no wonder th' money rolled in, 'cause ev'rybody used to drink like fury in them days. We'd been there only a short time when th' noise o' feet on th' *lanai* was heard an' Billy exclaimed:

"Here's Jaluit now!"

Th' entrance of a Chief always caused a stir. Natural-like, I felt curious to see th' ruler o' th' islan', so I sized Jaluit up close, pretendin', all th' while, not to be a-watchin' him. A great, towerin' man he stood, bigger, even, than th' Captain. Cruelty showed in ev'ry glance o' that dark face. He couldn't look square-eyed at any one as held a steady gaze to him. Said to be a brutal, treacherous, money-lustin' savage, I knowed, th' minute I passed my eyes over Jaluit, th' report was true. Of a sudden, he glanced 'round, fierce-like, from under his heavy eyebrows an' spoke to Billy. Three Bonham men an' a couple o' women had entered with Jaluit an' th' crowd of 'em glanced my way. Billy motioned, an' soon I found myself seated at their table, for he'd said I belonged on Captain Hayes's brig.

Jaluit acted polite enough, maybe, for a native, an' th' like o' that, but he carried himself altogether too insolent. He wanted for to know about Captain Hayes's business; where he had tradin' stations; what deals he made with his agents; how much he paid for this an' that, an' 'tween times, th' native kept a-sayin' what a big Chief he was, an' how he wanted for to make friends with Captain Hayes. He jus' kept a-firin' questions in a domineerin' way, like he'd some tremblin' Kanaka before him.

Now that wasn't th' course to steer with th' likes o' me, an' ev'rything he said an' did jus' made me dislike him worse. But my tongue kept civil. I seen right off through his game. We'd heard Captain Hayes say at Ascension Islan', he's goin' to fix up a tradin' concession at Bonham, so I jus' gets cute with Mister Chief an', while tellin'

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lots about th' Captain, my talk had to do with th' pretty girls we met an' th' fun we had ashore. At last I spoke frank enough —though 'twas a lie—that tradin' an' such-like was out o' my knowledge; but I added:

"More better wait. You speak go see Captain soon. Him tell you everything then."

That tack left Jaluit's sails a-flappin' an' give me th' chance to gaze at th' others.

Th' men was near as big as him an' just about as savage lookin', but th' women showed entirely different. Livin' at a tradin' port, they'd adopted many white ways. Instead o' wearin' th' scant clothes natives usually had, they appeared in long, bright-colored dresses, cut low at th' throat. Around their heads each wore a garland o' red flowers, like what th' natives in Hawaii calls a *lei*. Shy a bit they was, yet white men always caught th' notice o' native women, an' while keepin' silent an' seemin' to gaze down, hardly a look you passed or a thing you wore or did, escaped th' half-closed glances o' that pair.

I told of th' handsome clothes an' bright ornaments th' girls wore in Honolulu an' th' big cities far away; I pictured how fine th' Bonham girls would look if they had pretty jewelry, an' th' both of 'em laughed an' clapped their hands with joy when I let 'em put on some big rings I wore. 'Twas easy to note that Jaluit favored th' smaller girl, for he acted like he'd a right over her. She'd glance at him, cute-like, but she wasn't sparin' at all of her smiles at me. I jus' couldn't keep my eyes off that girl.

Now, I ain't good to describe women, but she'd th' brightes' o' brown eyes, th' kind as could get soft like velvet an' then flash fire; th' skin of her arms an' neck shone, an' her hair give off a blue-like sheen what got prettier all th' time. When she'd laugh, there'd seem to float out o' her graceful throat th' sweetest sound that man ever did hear. As we sat far into th' night, a-talkin' an' a-gettin' better acquainted, I had to grip myself to keep from leapin' up an' kissin' th' blood-red mouth of her.

WHEN Jaluit an' his party arrived two afternoons later to pay that call of honor, th' brig looked like a pleasure yacht—ship dressed, awnings spread, brass shinin', an' th' decks polished white as a sea-gull's breast. Ev'rything was done to please him, 'cause Captain Hayes wanted to lay th' course for puttin' that tradin' deal through. Th' Captain opened ev'ry kind o' liquor we carried; th' galley sizzled with good things to eat an' he had th' brig's women dressed their prettiest an' workin' their hardest to help entertain th' visitors.

Leihula, th' girl o' th' café, had come, so I saw as she got plenty of attention. It made little matter with me if Jaluit liked my actin' so or not, though one could see she felt a bit worried. As th' afternoon wore 'long, she got over her nervous way of lookin' toward Jaluit, an' acted real pleased when I'd come near. So, when th' party broke up, I spoke to her, low-voiced.

"You like we meet ashore, some time?" I asked.

Them high-class natives was proud, an', though she smiled, I feared, from her keepin' silent, she felt angry inside. Kind o' discouraged-like, I stood by th' side o' th' ship to see as if she'd say good-by. Just as they mounts th' companionway, she stops sudden, an', takin' off her garland, steps toward me, a-smilin'. We heard a snarl, an' she shrank back as that Jaluit staggered for us, his eyes blood-shot with rage. I'd no fear for him, but even before I could face th' savage, th' Captain's great fist held th' Chief, an' th' big voice of th' skipper roared out:

"We'll have one more drink, Jaluit, while th' Chiefess of Bonham gives my officer a peace offerin'."

So I bowed my head and she throwed th' *lei* across my shoulders. Then everybody went away laughin'. Jaluit's voice could be heard above 'em all, yet somehow it seemed to me as he didn't laugh jus' like he felt it.

That proved to be th' last o' th' girl. Though I went ashore ev'ry night, not a bit could I sight of her. I asked Billy so often about her that he got suspicious.

"You ain't tryin' to get foul of Leihula?" he demanded, sort of anxious-like. "Ain't there plenty of girls here to suit you? Now look a-here, Charlie, as a friend I speak: you'll do well for to get over any idee o' stealin' her. Jaluit ain't th' man to brook triflin'. You seen how anxious th' great Captain Bully Hayes is to make friends with him."

His warnin' stopped my talkin', but it didn't my thinkin'. Nothin' did. I got surly and had one fight after another. Th' only person I acted decent to was a little

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native boy who'd bring me a *lei* ev'ry day. It seemed funny he'd take a fancy to a sore-headed sailor, but there's no accountin' for th' likes them natives'd fall into. Well, 'long 'bout a week later, when me and two of th' boys off th' brig went into Billy's place, he give a queer look at me an' says:

"I've been waitin' for you. Go right over to th' house. Th' Missus wants to see you."

That was about th' last place to attract me, but, bein' as I felt so blue, I obeyed him. A glance at th' *lanai* an' my good nature come with a rush that put me in a tremble. I knowed right off then where them *leis* 'ad been comin' from. There sat Leihula waiting. As I leaped up th' steps, she come forw'rd, an' takin' off her own *lei*, throwed th' garland about me.

NEVER can th' mem'ry of th' next part o' my life depart. Not always could we meet, but bribery an' jumpin' th' brig 'd get me ashore mos' every night, to wait eager for even a sight o' her. Though both of us knowed we risked death every time we met, not an unhappy moment come to me, 'cept one evenin' when Peterson, th' mate, said:

"Charlie, you seems to be enjoyin' y'urself a lot ashore. Make th' most of it, for th' glass is droppin' in a way I don't like. Th' Old Man may order th' lot o' ye abo'rd to make th' run out o' here. Bonham is a bad place to be when th' wind starts kickin' up a sea."

Th' pair o' us acted like it all could never end. But a cruise like o' that does have to stop. 'Twas th' mate who brung me to realize it. Every night afore I'd gone ashore, eager, but this time, I shrunk back, afraid to face her. Th' girl, quick like women is, immediately spied breakers ahead.

"What th' matter, Talee?" she said; "you not glad for see me?"

Th' soft tremblin' look of her scared me. I could hardly speak, but she had to be told.

"Th' mate says we stand for Apia tomorrow!"

A gasp she gave an' toppled into my arms. "No, Talee!" she cried. "No leave me!"

She'd never looked so pretty as then. An', as I thought what all we'd been to each other, a desperate madness swept over me. I couldn't give her up.

"Will you come away on th' brig?" I asked.

'Twas too much to ask of her, th' highest chiefess of that place. I didn't understand them natives though, when they really like a man, for on th' instant she whispered:

"Yes! If you marry me!"

It was th' work o' them missionaries, pursuadin' th' islan' girls to demand a man should marry 'em. But I felt glad to do it. Why! I'd 'ave sold my soul had she asked me. Calling my boys, I said.

"Johnny, go for Billy. Call th' preacher an' then get her things!"

Now I'd never liked missionaries, but th' mos' welcome sight as ever come to mortal was th' figure of old Lotu makin' his way through th' trees. Quicker 'an mos' natives to learn white customs, th' fellow knowed it meant a fee to marry a sailor, an' he sure come with all sails set. How he did smile as he mounted th' steps! So did I.

"You like for marry, eh?" he exclaimed. "Very good for my Christ'an brother to take unto hisse'f a wedded wife." A pause, a smile, then he added, eager-like, "Say, Mister Sailormans, what you give me marry you?"

"How's this?"

One quick glance, an' a grin near split his face. He'd seen five big silver dollars in my fist.

"Allite!" he cried joyously. "You heep good Christ'an brother. Suppose go katch girl, queek. Me marry any time."

Then he paused in his smilin' an' rubbin' o' his palms. His eyes half closed, with a cunnin', eager look.

"Say, Mister Sailormans," he half-whispered, "suppose give money now?"

"Wait! We get married right away."

"Oh! Allite. Me like you heep. But no make fool of me, eh? You give money, sure?"

Then I called Leihula. Th' instant she come out o' th' house with Haumea, th' missionary seemed to catch a chill. All shakin', he drawed back.

"Me no can marry heem!" he exclaimed.

"Whaffore? Money no good?"

"No care for money! No can marry heem! Heem b'long Jaluit!"

"What'd you want of me, Charlie?" broke in a rough voice. 'Twas Billy's.

A second glance showed him th' missionary, an' then Billy flew into a rage.

"What this mean, Lotu?"

It made me glad to see as how Billy sprung to my help. Them missionaries was all th' time tryin' to interfere with us

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sailors, when they dared. Startin' for th' shrinkin' fellow, Billy continued:

"Whaffore you fool 'round my place, Lotu? I speak before, no come here."

"Heem like marry that girl," replied Lotu, pointin' toward me. "No can marry heem! Me heep 'fraid Jaluit!"

Billy stopped like a shot'd hit 'im. He give a long whistle.

"Oh, ho! That's th' course you're steerin', eh?" he said, low, to me. "Charlie, he's right. Jaluit's th' wildest savage in these parts, an' you ain't got money enough to handle him. It's risky enough seein' her as you've done, but for marryin', stop all such foolishness. She's not for th' likes o' you!"

HAD he struck me, I couldn't 've been more stunned. Yet, as my wits come back, they set loose a feelin' o' resentment which th' smirk o' triumph on that missionary's face didn't help calm. Right into th' face o' Billy I spoke:

"What kind of a friend is you? Three weeks ago you say a man ought for to marry. Now, when I've found th' woman, you turn on me. Well, trim sail with this missionary, he suits you so sudden; but I'll bring th' pair o' you to time, darned quick!"

Drawin' my revolver, I shoved th' muzzle ag'in th' bowels o' Lotu an' roared:

"You marry us now! Right in your house, too, Mister Billy!"

"Charlie, you're crazy!" exclaimed Billy, while th' missionary, like all natives cornered by a white man, tried to lie out o' danger.

"Allite!" he pleaded, "me marry. Me go quick, catch book. No can marry without Bibul."

"Never mind!" I yelled, "we'll do without th' book."

So, with th' gun pokin' his ribs, Lotu stood to th' helm, an' pronounced us man an' wife.

"Charlie, you're a rascal," declared Billy, smilin' in spite of himself, as we watched th' missionary rushin' away, my dollars clinkin' in his pocket. "Now get to th' brig as quick as Heaven'll let you. Don't come back either, for a good six months, until Jaluit gets over his anger."

"No, sir!" said I; "we'll stay an' drink to th' bride's health, like they does in white man's land!" I was feelin' pretty obstinate just then. "Besides, we've got to wait till my boy brings her things."

Th' glass 'ad scarce touched my lips, before we heard shoutin', th' noise o' hurryin' feet, th' sound of a body fallin', an', dashin' out, we saw Lono bleedin' on th' *lanai*.

"Talee!" he cried, "Jaluit try keel me. Now, he come keel you an' katch girl!"

"Darn you, Charlie!" exclaimed Billy; "you'll bring ruination into my house. Jaluit'll blame me fur this business. Get out o' here, right off!"

Leihula got frightened too, an', grabbin' me, cried:

"Yes, Talee! We run sheep, quick!"

But I hadn't finished with Billy, an' something else told me to stay.

"You're a friend, ain't you!" I sneered. "I guess as how you've forgot I saved y'ur life when th' cannibals tried to cut you down in New Caledonia."

"——! That was long ago! Get out of my house!"

Some people feels hurt when they've been done a wrong, but th' thought of his desertin' a shipmate put me in a frenzy. I wanted to wreck him an' his outfit. But th' girl kept holdin' me back. We could see th' livin' daylights 'ad been scared out o' her, an' with good reason. She'd watched Jaluit kill two men in a drunken rage; she'd seen him choke a trader to death; we'd heard rumors, but she knew of his murderin' part of a whalin' crew, wrecked on th' far side o' th' atoll.

Suddenly she started tremblin' violently, an', pointin' at th' grove, cried:

"Heem come now! Queek, run!"

We saw a dark object rushin' toward th' house. Bigger an' taller that savage seemed than that afternoon aboard th' brig. Yet not for an instant did I hesitate. Tearin' loose from Leihula, I sprung out o' th' shadow, down th' steps into th' moonlight that lay all about like a great thick silver pool.

"For God's sake, Charlie," cried Billy, "come here an' run fur it while there's a chance! Th' whole islan's back of 'im!"

"Talee, come to me!" implored th' girl.

But neither his warnin' or her entreaty halted me.

"By——, no!" I shrieked. "I'll stay an' fight him right here for her!"

BACK of my hatred of Jaluit, my insane frenzy to tear him open with my hands, something deeper an' stronger drove me on. I knowed well that, plead as she would for us to run, down in

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her woman's heart that girl wanted me to fight. All women does at a time like that. I jus' had to meet him; I had to prove before her she'd made no mistake in her pick of a man. Desperate? Yes! For a full fifty pound heavier, a good span taller that devil carried. Yet gladly I waited to close with him. But we wasn't to battle that way.

Breakin' out o' th' shade, th' coward cut loose with a Winchester. I shot from my waist an' th' dog sprung behind a tree. Two more shots from my left told me his band approached. Even then I'd have rushed on him, but Leihula, with a shriek, ran down th' steps an' dragged me back on th' *lanai.* 'Twas no sign of a yellow streak now to run. He'd refused to fight, fair an' square. We started through th' house. Then there come th' thud o' many feet; ere we could clear th' rear, Jaluit's pack had run up an' cut off every avenue of escape.

"Ye allers was a bull-headed idiot!" roared Billy; "now see what your infernal foolishness has brung us to!"

"Oh, shut up!" I exclaimed. "Th' instant Captain Hayes hears them shots he'll send his whole crew ashore. He won't let no nigger treat one o' his officers like this!"

"Don't be a fool!" exclaimed Billy impatiently. "Man, he's got too much at stake on this islan' to bother with you!"

A second thought left me clear-headed as Billy. Of course th' Captain wouldn't stand back o' me. And then I begun to realize what a fool I'd been in th' whole business. Though Jaluit planned downright murder, I knowed right off I couldn't kill him or his men, for th' natives 'd rise ag'in Captain Hayes and shut him frum off Bonham. Generous he might be at times, yet our skipper wasn't th' man to let no sense o' right stand in a case like o' that.

We had to depend on ourselves to get back to th' brig.

Certain of his victims, Jaluit an' six others, rushed to th' front *lanai.* Just as we closed th' entrance he heaved his great shoulder ag'in th' door, shatterin' th' lock. He sprung inside, but a crack on th' head from my revolver drove him bellowin' back an' give us time to make a barricade o' th' furniture. Then th' bullets begun crashing through th' door.

"Curses on you, Charlie," roared Billy. "he'll wreck th' house! What, th' name o' th' devil, is you doin', Jaluit?" he begun hollerin', as he made to open th' door.

It seemed a rough act to turn a man out o' his home, but we had to be rid o' Billy. We couldn't risk treachery. Th' instant Lono opened th' side door, I rushed Billy to th' edge o' th' *lanai,* an' our friendship ended with a kick.

Th' relief frum seein' him sprawlin' on th' ground lasted only a instant. Goin' into th' main room, I seen Haumea who I'd forgot all about. I expected she'd rush at my throat. But she didn't. Away in another room, she hadn't realized what had happened to her husband.

"Haumea, suppose you like go, all same Beele? Heem no stop house now."

"No!" she replied, her eyes flashin'. "Jaluit, heem no good. Beele like all time go Jaluit. Me stop my house. Maybe you feex Jaluit by-em-by."

Angry at her husband an' desperate as them native women got in their jealous fits, she secretly hoped to see th' Chief shot down, for well she knew th' only time Billy acted unkind to her happened when Jaluit got him a-drinkin'. An' I ain't so sure, either, but another reason for her stayin' was th' woman of her anxious to help Leihula, her Chiefess an' friend, win th' man she loved. So she remained, and big help she gave us.

We heard th' hoarse roars o' Jaluit, th' cries o' his followers, mingled with th' pleadin' o' Billy. Enraged as th' crowd acted ag'in him, Billy welcomed his release. It give him th' chance to appease Jaluit, an' a bigger reason lay in his fear th' natives'd raid th' café. A Bonham nigger, roused, acted bad enough, but liquor made him a fiend. Now, Billy had hundreds an' hundreds o' dollars' worth o' drink stuff, an' he had to save his place. He carried great influence with Jaluit, an' finally pursuaded him to go to th' saloon an' talk over th' trouble.

WATCHIN' th' tall, rangy shadows o' th' coconut-trees, I found to my alarm that th' natives guardin' th' cottage didn't show so plain. Th' shadows kept shiftin', too. A puff of wind struck my face, another, an' then th' meanin' of it all dawned. That freshenin' told th' gale th' mate had warned of was upon us. Gazin' southeast, we could see th' sky growin' darker an' darker. Soon th' moon disappeared behind a cloud an' everything got dim. Oh, how I cursed that storm an' th'

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comin' black of it, for 'twould give Jaluit a terrible advantage.

Th' savage happened to be more intent, jus' then, thinkin' o' th' woman. He begun pleadin' an' orderin' Leihula to come out, but never once did she speak to him. I couldn't stay so indifferent.

"Why don't you come an' take her?" I roared.

I taunted him in all th' lingo I knowed. I damned him in English; I blackguarded him in Dutch; I villified him in bêche-de-mer; I tongue-lashed him in th' pigeon talk o' Bonham. With each volley, I'd dare him to fight with his hands for th' girl, an' prove himself worthy to be a Chief.

Jaluit lashed himself into a fury. Time an' ag'in he'd dash with his men against th' house. His crew exposed 'emselves in th' most reckless way. Yet we held 'em off, an' many a sore wound an' many a broken head did we inflict. When not leadin' his men, th' Chief would stand by an' empty his Winchester into th' cottage. Lucky for us, he owned th' only repeatin' rifle among th' natives, but a dozen of his tribe trained their muzzle-loaders at th' house. Th' devils, too, hurled rocks an' clubs, an' used trunks o' trees, even, as batterin'-rams, until th' place was dreadful to behold. Not a window remained; every door was bullet-holed like a sieve; th' walls splintered an' tore an' th' *lanais* strewed with wreckage.

Bad as our situation might be, we knowed every thud hurt Billy like it come frum a vital spot in him.

"Jaluit!" he kept cryin', "my house done cost me two thousand dollars. My wife inside, too! You no hurt her, Jaluit!"

"What you bring white mans here for?" demanded th' savage. "Heem your fren'! Me no keel heem, then me keel you!"

Billy knowed his people well. He'd give answer by rushin' to th' saloon, return with his arms full o' bottles an' pour th' stuff out faster'n a crowd o' drunken sailors could 'a' ordered it. Jaluit would always get in a better humor right off, and always promise no harm should come to Haumea, but th' liquor would make him worse mad at me. He'd redouble th' fury o' th' attacks.

Suddenly come a crash, a sharp tinglin' o' glass, an' then we heard th' most awful wailin' from Haumea.

"They've shot her!" I cried.

Runnin' into th' big room, I seen Billy's wife, not wounded, but shakin' her fists an' swearin' as she stomped about an' pointed at th' wreck o' a long pier-glass what 'd stood ag'in th' wall.

"—— Jaluit!" she roared. "Heem shoot my lookey-glass. Heem heep no good!"

Goin' to th' window she begun shriekin' in th' voice of an infuriated woman. Now, not knowin' th' pure Bonham lingo, I can't say as whether she abused him worse 'an I'd done, but she did it faster an' longer, bein' a woman. Th' Chief yells back, whereupon she got worse mad an' flew to her bedroom, cryin':

"Lait! Me feex heem good!"

That lookin'-glass had been th' pride o' Haumea's life. Billy had paid th' Captain of a 'Frisco tradin' schooner a good sum to rip it out of th' ship's cabin. All over th' Pacific where sailors talked o' Bonham, Haumea's glass was knowed.

WOMEN is a lot worse'n men when they gets angry, an' Haumea's rage seemed more savage than Jaluit's ravin's. Rushin' from Billy's room with his Winchester rifle, she stood by th' front window and begun pumpin' shots faster'n th' Chief'd ever been able to do. Th' crowd scattered like chaff before a gale. Seein' Jaluit peerin' from behind a tree, she acted like a crazy woman. If Lono an' Johnny hadn't held her, she'd 'a' dashed into th' lot o' 'em.

But I only smiled.

"Never mind, Haumea," I said; "Jaluit break lookey-glass, so bad luck come to heem. We get away sure!"

But she didn't understand th' white man's omen. In her woman's way o' thinkin', she believed th' surest way to bring Jaluit bad luck was to kill him.

No wonder Jaluit's rage seemed diabolical. A full score of his men lay wounded; th' women defied him an' his revenge seemed no nearer satisfied. Suddenly he roared:

"Me burn down house!"

That threat took th' fight out o' me for a moment. All th' desperate battlin' we'd had seemed like child's play to what we'd get next. Almost on th' instant, we saw a fire bust into relief an' heard th' wild yells o' th' natives dancin' madly about th' flames risin' higher each second. His new plan of attack seemed certain to succeed. Th' house stood on supports, four feet above th' ground. Underneath lay piles o' palm-leaves in-

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tended for makin' mats an' small huts. Once a spark touched them dried things they'd burn like tinder.

Soon lights started movin' all 'round. Weird an' pretty they looked through th' trees, but death lurked in each torch that begun to hem us in.

Durin' all th' fight I'd wondered why some o' my mates hadn't sneaked ashore from th' brig, jus' to mix up in th' excitement, unbeknown to th' Captain. Th' only hope I could see now lay in Billy. I felt sure he'd get word to Captain Hayes so as to try an' save Haumea an' th' house. In fact, th' coward'd disappeared when th' fire got started.

The cottage lay free, with a cleared space about twenty feet all 'round. We could hold 'em off with careful shootin', trustin' to luck not to kill any o' th' wretches. Just about that time, though, th' gatherin' storm swept 'long, drivin' great heavy clouds ahead of it. Then the moon died down an' left us in total darkness.

Only one way to cope wid them advancin' fire fiends remained. Leavin' th' girls to watch from above, me an' th' boys clumb into th' cleared space. Th' torches was our only targets. No native likes to face a desperate, quick-shootin' white man, an' while no yells followed my shots, many a torch was dropped as th' bearer sought cover. But good come swift on th' heels o' bad, 'cause we hadn't been outside five minutes afore th' most welcome thing since th' start o' th' fight happened.

Great drops o' rain begun to fall!

Jaluit knowed th' comin' torrent'd prevent his firin' th' house. His men, liquor crazed, took 'most every chance to get up to us. Th' lightnin' kept a-breakin' right overhead, an' made th' place near as light as day. Each one peered eager at th' sky an' felt at th' air, 'cause th' storm seemed to be th' only thing as could save us now. Jaluit knowed it too, an' he wasn't to be balked.

"Get oil!" he roared. "Get oil! Me fire house!"

A lull come in th' attacks. Then next we heard a awful crash by th' front *lanai*, followed by shriekin' frum th' women. Johnny an' me sprung inside an' found th' girls strugglin' with a window-full o' natives. Rainin' blows from our clubs an' guns on to th' band, we drove 'em away.

Worn out, I sat down. A cry from Lono an' fierce yells on th' outside, brung me to my feet. A glance, an' my heart seemed to stop beatin'.

Right under th' house shone a bright light that we knowed too well!

Timin' a double attack, th' devils had got torch-men under th' cottage just as we drove off th' main body. Johnny an' me tumbled wildly out o' th' window, crawled under the house an' drawed th' blazin' leaves out, barely in time to save th' place.

Burned an' near dead from th' fright, I started into th' house, 'cause we'd heared th' women talkin' to 'emselves. I feared th' men we'd left senseless on th' *lanai* had come to. As I clumb into th' side window Leihula cried frum th' front:

"Jaluit! Call off men! Me come!"

Right off he shouted:

"Allite! Me stop fight!"

Speedin' frantically into th' main room, I found th' barricade down. As th' lightnin' flashed, I saw a figure clad in a red dress that I'd learned to love walk off th' *lanai* an' start toward th' waitin' savage.

If ever hell come into a man's soul, it burned in mine that moment. Everything got black inside an' murder took hold o' me.

"Betrayed by that lyin' woman!" I shrieked.

'Twas th' end of all for me. God! After I'd made that fight, too! I started to rush after her, to drag her down, to kill Jaluit, to die fightin', when I felt a soft hand laid on my arm an' heard a voice whisper:

"Come, Talee! We go sheep now!"

What a woman! No wonder my mind fell in a jumble. Nobody could 'a' thought clear. Th' terrible strain we'd been under —th' loyalty of Haumea to her Chiefess— th' women's wisdom thinkin' a way to save us—all rushed, vague-like, through my brain.

HALF carryin' Leihula, I dashed forth into th' torrent that seemed to drop from th' sky as we left th' cottage. We'd no time to think what would happen when Jaluit learned o' th' trick; we'd only a few minutes' start; our sole chance lay in reachin' th' beach ahead o' them natives.

An' while we ran, a fresh fear come. Had th' savages thought to smash th' boat—our only means of escape? But they hadn't, an', in a few seconds, th' four o' us got th' craft under way.

Five strokes hadn't been taken afore we

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knowed another desperate struggle had to be made. Th' gale, runnin' now to th' full, had whipped up a tremendous sea. Where a gentle swell most times set inshore, great combers raced. No one but people flyin' for their lives would 'a' dared venture on such a trip. But into th' white wall of 'em we drove. Not alone was th' waves sweepin' straight into us, but a cross set o' breakin' water ran. First on her beam ends th' boat'd roll; then, without headway, fall water-logged into th' next insweep o' water. Th' howl o' th' gale, th' crashin' o' th' combers, th' beat o' th' rain, shut off other sounds. Only by shoutin' could I make my people hear. But, at last, we cleared th' main line o' breakin' sea.

"Keep up, boys!" I yelled; "we'll soon be safe aboard th' brig!"

Weakened from his wound, no wonder Lono kept peerin' anxious over his shoulder toward th' open sea. Finally, exhausted, he dropped his oar an' muttered:

"No use, boss! No find brig! Me 'fraid!"

Despite th' awful roarin', everything seemed to grow dead still. Th' very life inside me stopped! I understood now why we couldn't find th' vessel.

Captain Hayes had stood to sea!

Hadn't th' mate foretold th' storm an' give warnin' th' brig would stand from Bonham to escape destruction? 'Twas plain enough why none o' th' boys had sneaked ashore to help our fight. Of course, Billy had failed to find th' brig. With my brain clearin', a realization of our situation come with full force.

Escaped from Jaluit! Yes! But to what fate? We couldn't live longer in that sea. Th' brig was gone! We had to go back to Bonham! Even though we might land in th' darkness, we couldn't hope to elude Jaluit's pack for long—Bonham was a small atoll. Just then a lull come in th' noise, th' girl stopped bailin' an' listened intent. Then she cried:

"Queek! Me hear!"

We heard a bell strikin', an' a moment later saw a dark mass loomin' dead ahead.

WE'D been hull-down for hours, when they called me to th' deck.

"Captain, heem like speak you, Talee," said th' bowsw'in.

I'd rather again faced all we'd gone through than meet that man. Th' bowsw'in's scared look had warned me o' trouble, showed on Captain Hayes's face. His great figure towered broad above me, his countenance showed livid, his eyes looked like light blue fire burnin' back in his head.

"So you think," he roared, "you can steal chiefesses an' bring 'em aboard my ship!" An' then he fouled me for ev'rything he could lay his awful tongue to.

Scared, but I didn't flinch.

"Well, sir," I made bold to answer, "there's lots o' other girls on th' *Leonora*, as come th' same way."

That got him in a worse anger. Still he held his rage afore th' watchin' crew, but, to me, his silence seemed like th' dead stillness afore th' breakin' of a hurricane. Puttin' his fists on them thin flanks o' his, he glared down on me.

"I'm thinkin' what to do with you," he said slowly, 'tween his big white teeth.

His eyes closed tighter; his jaw set like stone. I'd fought them savages an' won; I'd faced th' gale an' won, but copin' with Captain Hayes was different. I knowed well then I'd lost. He was thinkin', maybe, whether to clap me in irons an' stand back for Bonham an' hand me over to Jaluit, all 'cause some fool mouth had told him th' girl was th' Chief's.

As I watched him, dazed at th' bad turn things had took, his grim look softened an' a smile started across his face. He was gazin' past me now. I didn't understand. Then he spoke,

"So this is th' girl? Come here, child!"

A step an' Leihula stood beside me. Th' Captain's eyes shone with admiration. Immediately a fresh fear come—maybe as she'll be a new reason for his gettin' rid o' me—'cause I'd never seen her lookin' so beautiful afore.

"By golly!" he muttered to th' mate, "she's pretty, ain't she?"

When th' Captain spoke ag'in, 'twas to th' girl he talked.

"An' you love him?" he asked, pretty near gentle.

"Ay, sir," she said, low-voiced an' bashful.

An' next he made her tell what-all we'd done. In her honest, proud way, she spoke, an' when she'd finished, th' Captain stood silent a few seconds, an' exclaimed, half-loud to himself:

"By——! What won't a man do for a woman!"

But she'd won him to a generous humor.

"Well," he said to me, "she's yours.

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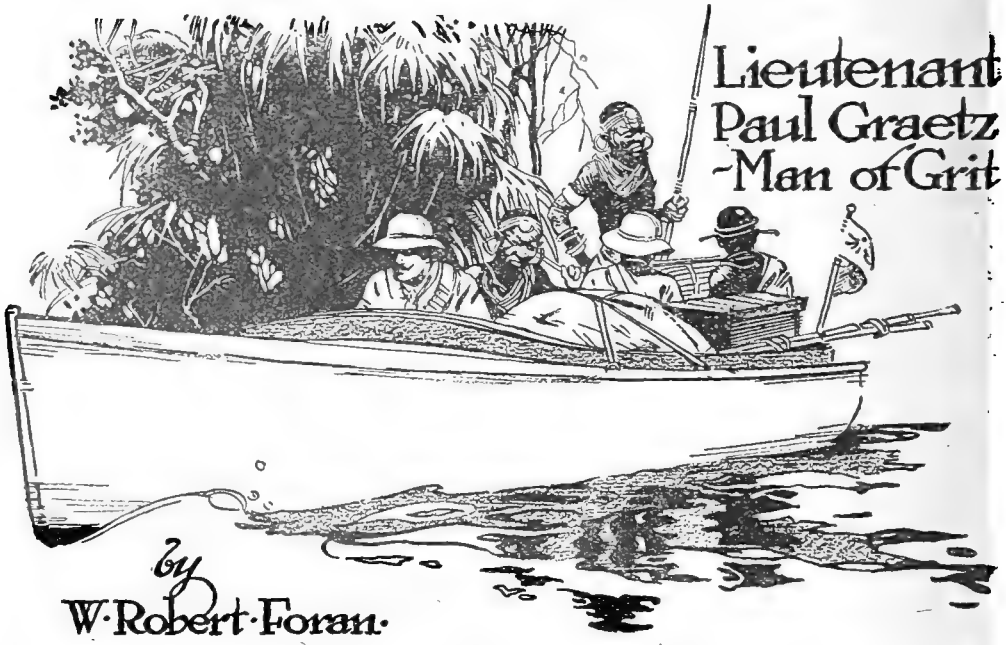
I'll buy Jaluit off, just as Billy's had to do by now to square his wife's part in this job. My boy, I've stolen women in my time, an' somehow I can't but like a man who gets 'em that way.

"Charlie," an' his voice got grave, "this girl's well worth fightin' over, an' she loves you, just as most women would after what you've done, but take care some man don't deal with you as you treated Jaluit. Women are queer creatures. If they wasn't, I guess there wouldn't be any Law of Bonham."



Lieutenant Paul Graetz —Man of Grit

by W. Robert Foran

TWO years ago, or a little more, all Europe was electrified by the news that Africa had been traversed by Lieutenant Paul Graetz of the German army in an automobile. His thrilling adventures on this daring and plucky expedition are of too recent occurrence to have been entirely forgotten.

I happened by great good luck to be in Dar-es-Salaam, in German East Africa, when Lieutenant Graetz was there a few years ago, before his expedition. As I remember him then, he was a typical German army officer, one of the many who are aiding to build up their portion of Africa. I saw him for only a few hours; but I liked him. There was something about the man that drew you irresistibly toward him. Maybe our inherent love of adventure may have had something to do with this feeling, although I must confess that he has achieved things I can never hope to achieve.

The Germans in Africa carry their love of beer with them from the Fatherland; and it was at one of the typical German beer seances that I met him. He was silent and listened with a ready courtesy to what the others were saying. Of his own hopes of conquering the still unknown regions of Africa I heard not a word. Yet, somehow I was drawn to him.

You have only to look at him once to feel the indomitable, restless spirit that inhabits his large frame. Perhaps, if I had been less accustomed to meeting men of this nature, I should have been even more impressed with Graetz. I shall always regret that I did not make more use of the honor of this meeting, brief but proudly cherished in my memories.

Silent, tall, face tanned to a red-brick color by exposure to the tropical sun, Graetz is a man. He breathes the atmosphere of adventure; but like all true seekers after excitements unknown to the prosaic dwellers in hampered civilization, he will rarely speak of his deeds. Inured to the

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hardships of travel and exploration, he revels in the mysteries of the unknown. We, who have tasted of these delights even in meager portions, can sympathize; others may envy him. Africa is a strange country. You may meet a man there to-day and pass him by as nothing extraordinary, deeming him but as others around you; and on the morrow you may wake up to find the universe ringing with his name. Such was the case in my meeting with Graetz.

TO HAVE crossed Africa in an automobile is no mean boast, when one remembers that there are no roads and no repair or gasoline supply stores en route. The Cape-to-Cairo Railway—that great dream of a truly great empire builder, Cecil Rhodes—is fast nearing completion; and in a year, or perhaps a little more, travelers may journey in luxurious comfort by train and steamer from Cape Town to Alexandria. They who do this will be able then to realize to the fullest possible extent what the pioneers of travel in the African hinterland had to contend with.

One would think that to bring to a successful termination such a gigantic feat as that which Lieutenant Graetz set himself in his famous African automobile expedition would be sufficient to satisfy even the most gluttonous appetite for adventure. Yet it is typical of Lieutenant Graetz that he should not rest content with this one truly great achievement.

ACROSS AFRICA BY MOTOR-BOAT

ON HIS former trip through Africa by automobile, Paul Graetz heard of a very mysterious lake in northeastern Rhodesia. He determined to explore it. His plans grew in magnitude and another great adventure was born.

His project, undertaken on behalf of the *African World*, was to cross the great and practically unknown regions of Central Africa from the Indian to the Atlantic Ocean, by way of the Zambesi River, Lake Bangweolo, and the Congo River. However, not by automobile this time, but by motor-boat. This offered something unique in the way of African travel. It meant hardships and disappointments innumerable, but what of that? No one had ever before attempted it. If it was humanly possible, Paul Graetz determined to do it.

He mapped out a route that would take him from Quilimane, the port on the coast of Portuguese East Africa, to the mysterious Lake Bangweolo, by way of the River Quaqua, Lacerdonia, River Shire, Port Herald, Chicuana, Fort Johnstone, Lake Nyassa, Karonga, and then across the watershed to Fife. The motor-boat was specially prepared for this part of the journey, being fitted with wheels for use on land.

From Fife he decided to travel by way of the Chambesi River, Kabinga, and thus arrive at the shores of the small inland sea, Lake Bangweolo, upon which no white man had ever sailed. After spending some time exploring this unknown water and collecting specimens of aquatic and land life, Graetz planned to push on to the Atlantic by way of the Luapula, Lake Meru, Paula, Kasengo, Lukongzolva, Kiambi, Stanleyville, Coquillhatville, Yumbi, and Leopoldville, and thus to the mouth of the Congo.

Take up a map of Africa and trace out this route for yourself, and you may realize in part what this stupendous journey of six thousand miles (allowing for the necessarily tortuous route to be followed) meant to Lieutenant Graetz and his companion, the French cinematograph operator, Monsieur Octave Fière.

Graetz had heard of the magic Lake Bangweolo from the Awemba tribe. It had a sinister reputation among the native tribes resident both near and far from its shores. The Awemba people told him that Bangweolo was studded with islands, on which were to be found colossal elephants and gigantic giraffes, while on its waters swam huge sea-serpents and other strange creatures. From the surface of the lake hot springs rose and fell like fountains in the air; and pestilential winds, sweeping across the reedy marshes, carried death to all living beings.

No health resort this; rather a Dante's Inferno! No natives venturing upon its waters in their frail, fantastically shaped canoes had ever returned. It was regarded by some tribes as a sort of Hades, where departed souls suffered continually the most dreadful torments; while others again thought that it was the approach to Paradise, where the spirits of their dead relatives enjoyed perfect life under the protection of their gods.

It was known to be surrounded by thick and impenetrable rushes, making its exploration a matter of great difficulty. The

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great prize which Graetz hoped to secure, in addition to being the first explorer of this wonderful lake set deep in the heart of the wilds of Africa, was specimens of a species of gigantic buffalo, which were commonly believed by the natives to make their home on the shores of the lake. They were known to be unusually fierce and dangerous, but this did not deter Graetz and his plucky companion from their adventurous quest after them.

THE PLUNGE INTO THE WILDERNESS

LIEUTENANT GRAETZ left Berlin on February 25, 1911, accompanied by Fière and his motor-launch, the *Sarotti*. Elaborate arrangements were made at Quilimane for their plunge into the wilderness. His motor-boat, which was to carry himself, his colleague, a native cook named James, and four African servants, measured twenty-five feet long and five feet six inches in beam, with a draught of sixteen inches. It was propelled by a ten-horse-power motor.

Before commencing his journey, the German made extraordinarily complete arrangements for securing necessities and comforts en route. In addition to all edibles and drinks, supplies of bioscope films, cartridges, photographic chemicals, gasoline and oil for the motor, medicine and other essentials were placed at twenty stations on the way. He also provided himself with a supply of fireworks and conjuring apparatus with which to overawe any unfriendly natives met with in the wilds.

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At last all was ready for the start and the two explorers set forth on their adventurous journey. Mile by mile they made their way up the Quaqua, Shire, and so to Lake Nyassa. We will pass lightly over this section of the great journey, for it was similar to many another African trip by boat on river and lake. But once they had reached Karonga their real difficulties commenced. The motor-launch had to be pushed on its wheels across the watershed by the so-called Stevenson road—which is no road at all in the generally accepted meaning of the word—to Fife and thence to the Chambesi River, so that Lake Bangweolo might eventually be reached. Where obstructions impeded progress—and there were countless numbers of such places—they had to be overcome. Trees had to be felled, streams bridged, hills climbed, and bush cleared from the self-made path.

After days and days of toil in terrific tropical heat, the voyagers reached the banks of the Chambesi River and again took to the watercourses. This part of the trip was full of dangers, unexpected and entirely impossible to guard against. The river had never before been navigated by anything larger than a native canoe. It was uncharted, full of sand-banks and snags, and the hippopotami daily threatened the small vessel with disaster. But these were all part of the game to the German and Frenchman. Every obstacle overcome added but one more ounce of zest to their grim determination to succeed in their self-imposed task.

STALKED BY THREE HUGE BUFFALOES

ALL went well with them until they had nearly reached the shores of the mysterious Lake Bangweolo. Then disaster, dire and dreadful, overtook them. Within sight of their goal they were overcome by a cruel, relentless fate.

At dawn on September third, the blood-red morning sun triumphantly rose over the summit of the dark chain of the Muchemwa Mountains, bathing all nature in its glorious beauty. It bade them rise and continue their journey down the Chambesi to the lake, their long-hoped-for destination. The sun melted the mists from the river's surface, and at the feet of the two explorers, as they issued from their tent on the bank of the river, lay their little motor-launch at anchor in a small bay.

It was glistening under a covering of dew, slowly evaporating under the powerful early rays of the equatorial sun. All was peace and quiet. But in Africa things happen quickly. One moment there is no danger, and the next you are battling for your life against some unexpected terror.

At six-thirty the two white men embarked, and a few minutes later the African servants were rowing lustily up the Chambesi toward Bangweolo, for whenever possible they saved their gasoline and rowed. Moreover, there were many shallow channels to be negotiated and these were the more easily navigated without use of the motor.

For a time nothing unusual happened. There was no sign of life beyond occasional birds along the river-banks. At last a convenient place to land and partake of breakfast was found, and the two men ran the launch into the bank. The cook and servants busily stirred themselves to prepare the delayed meal. The white men rested, lazily watching their followers' deft movements. The meal was ready to be served and the men rose to take their seats at the camp table.

But suddenly they stood petrified with astonishment. Not more than fifty paces from them, close to the river-bank, stood three mighty buffalo, watching them with wondering eyes! They had appeared so silently through the undergrowth and reeds that no one had had warning of their approach. These were no ordinary buffalo. They were gigantic and suggestive of prehistoric types.

Silence, deep and impressive, like that silence which foreshadows death, reigned for a brief moment. Then Lieutenant Graetz awoke to the danger that threatened them. With the almost automatic precision of the adventurer in savage lands, he unslung his rifle. The Frenchman, Fière, followed his example. Graetz fired the moment his cheek rested along the butt of his Mauser rifle and the sights came on. *Bang!* the shot rang out, awakening the bird life and echoing through the trees beyond them and then faintly back again. The leading buffalo stumbled and fell on his knees, rose again, shook his ponderous head in mingled anger and pain, and then, dashing up the river-bank, galloped from sight into the bushes. The other two followed their wounded brother's example.

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Meanwhile Fière stood ready to fire in case of necessity, but there was no further need now. Intermittently through the undergrowth the two men caught glimpses of the buffaloes' shaggy forms as they followed the course of the stream toward the lake. But presently they saw but two of them. What had become of the third, they asked themselves. They were not out of danger yet, apparently. Perhaps the third animal still kept company with his fellows but was hidden by the bushes; more likely still, he had left them—the surest possible sign that he was severely wounded. Good! They would get him yet. "Bos caffer Graetzii" would read well in museum records and zoological books, thought Graetz to himself.

TRAILING THE BEAST FOR SIX HOURS

THE decision to follow and kill the wounded giant was quickly reached. Breakfast was forgotten. Leaving the cook and two of the native followers to clear away the untasted meal and pack the motor-launch ready for a renewed start, Graetz and Fière hastened off on the trail of the buffalo. It was not hard to follow. Large smears of blood were to be seen everywhere; on bushes, on rocks, on the bare soil, and against trees it showed plainly. The spoor led up the bank of the Chambesi and headed undoubtedly for the shelter of Lake Bangweolo.

Hour after hour went by and still the two hunters kept steadily tracking the beast. The sun climbed high into the heavens until it was directly overhead, scorching everything and every one with its fiery rays. But the white men and their followers thought little of that. They were possessed by an all-powerful lust for the blood of this new mammoth of the African jungles. Besides, until they had killed, they could not rest and eat; their sporting instincts would not permit this until all hope of success was lost. The true sportsman never deserts a wounded quarry until he has killed it.

At last, after six hours of fruitless search, nature demanded a temporary halt. It was after midday. Graetz decided to have the motor-launch brought up to them and a man was sent back to get it. In the meantime the two white men rested. In three hours the launch reached them and the cook immediately began to prepare a satisfying lunch for the tired and famished hunters. Breakfast and lunch would have to be merged into one meal. This is not an infrequent occurrence in African travel, and the two men were accustomed to it.

While the meal was under preparation, Graetz sent three of the "boys" to search further for the wounded buffalo, for he was positive that it must be somewhere in their vicinity. He offered his followers a liberal "bakshish" and with this incentive to a speedy location of the buffalo, they hastened off into the bush. Breakfast-and-lunch was just about to be served when the "boys" came running back to announce that they had found the wounded buffalo lying in the long grass near the river. So much good luck had been hoped for, but hardly expected.

THE HAND-TO-HAND BATTLE

GRAETZ and Fière rose excitedly to their feet and got their rifles. They were only just in time, for at that moment the high grass parted right in front of the former, and the animal dashed out, making straight for the German! He fired, and at the same time Fière fired also, so that the two rifle reports sounded as one. Graetz sprang to one side to escape the furious charge of the maddened animal. As he did so, his foot caught in the long grass and he fell on his knees. It proved his salvation. If he had remained upright he would have been impaled upon the sharp and cruel points of the buffalo's wide-sweeping horns.

Snorting with extreme fury, the huge beast nosed under the lieutenant who was now lying prostrate on the ground, trying to toss him. At last Graetz sprang to his feet and clung with all his strength to the horns of the beast, in the vain hope that, severely wounded as the buffalo was, he might give way before his own strength, or that Fière might get a chance for a second shot. For a few brief minutes, which seemed hours to Graetz, man and beast pitted their strength against each other's. The huge denizen of the forests was rapidly tiring from loss of blood, but Graetz was no match for the strength of the enormous beast. It all happened in a few minutes; the buffalo tried to shake the man off, and, as he flung his shaggy head from side to side, the point of his left horn pierced its

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way deep into Graetz's right cheek. He cried out with pain and then felt himself suddenly hurled upward into the air and consciousness left him.

In the meantime, Fière had come gallantly to his companion's rescue, unmindful of his own danger. He fired, but succeeded only in making the buffalo more infuriated. The savage beast turned rapidly upon him and tossed him repeatedly into the air, tearing his body dreadfully.

Then, as if worn out with its terrific efforts to avenge the attack on itself, the buffalo toppled over dead beside the bodies of its foes.

In a recent letter Graetz himself best describes what happened next. His account is a graphic, yet simply worded, narrative of heroic resourcefulness. In my travels in Africa I have met two men—Colonel Eric Smith, of the Horse Guards, and Mr. Benjamin Eastwood, the Chief Accountant of the Uganda Railway—who have actually amputated their own arms when dire necessity demanded it, but I can conceive of nothing more courageous than Lieutenant Graetz's own self-accomplished surgery. Far from medical aid, with his companion in misfortune gored to the point of death, suffering indescribable agony, Graetz acted expeditiously and saved his own life by his ready courage.

THE AMAZING COURAGE OF LIEUTENANT GRAETZ

IN THE days when anesthetics were an unknown quantity, men and women had perforce to bear all manner of operations with remarkable fortitude. But we were a hardier race then. Civilization has weakened our bodies and we are unable to endure pain as did our forefathers. Yet to be able to amputate an arm or sew up terrible wounds for oneself is a thing that was rarely done in the past ages. In Africa, it is not an uncommon thing. It seems only fitting that, in a country where the natives themselves bear pain with stoical indifference, the white man, who exists safely only by his own proof of being a superior being, should show the same wonderful bravery.

"I awoke," writes Graetz, when sufficiently recovered to put pen to paper, "covered with blood. I was lying on the river-bank, with the motor-boat at my feet, supported by two howling native servants.

"'Where is Fière?' I asked.

"'The others are bringing him; he will die soon, too,' they replied.

"'And the buffalo?'

"'Dead,' was the laconic reply.

"A thick flood of blood was continually flowing from my mouth and the right side of my face. The natives lifted me into the boat, and with every movement the blood flowed faster.

"'Quick,' I managed to gasp, 'the medicine-chest!'

"They brought it to me. There was only one thing to do and that quickly. Sew, sew, sew! Terrible necessity taught me how to ply the surgical needle. With a native holding my shaving-mirror before me and another supporting me by the shoulders, I thrust the needle through the flesh. A jagged, irregular hole as large as my hand gaped in my right cheek; my under lip hung loosely quivering. Under the horrified gaze of the natives I jabbed the bent needle again and again into my flesh and cobbled the tattered ends together.

"The pain was excruciating. Heaven alone helped me to keep my senses. To this day I do not know how I managed to do it. The lower jaw was broken in two places—near the ear and near the lip—and from this crushed mass a long splinter of bone with three teeth attached hung loosely by the nerves and flesh of the gums. The whole outer flesh of the lower jaw was scraped loose. Teeth, roots and bones lay white and shimmering through the hole in my cheek. My tongue, pierced by the point of the buffalo's horn, was half torn from its foundations. I spat continuously splinters of bone and teeth.

"At last the operation was finished to the best of my ability, and I bandaged my face as best I knew how. A strong stimulant gave me new life and helped me to face the other surgical operation for Fière.

"In the meantime the tent had been erected and a bed prepared for my poor companion, from whom James, the cook, had already cut the clothes with a pair of scissors. He had recovered consciousness, and softly his pale lips formed the words, '*tres mauvais* [very bad].' He had been pierced and tossed three times. The left breast muscle hung loose; heart and lungs were untouched. In the left side, between heart and hip, was a great tear. This

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wound I immediately sewed together. James washed, bandaged, and put Fière to bed. He breathed regularly, and seemed to sleep.

"Night fell dark and dismal—a night full of pain, during which my mouth seemed full of red-hot stones. Toward morning a short, troubled sleep gave me temporary relief from my awful agony. With the gray light of dawn I awoke to fresh tortures. Everything was deadly still. I summoned the servants by clapping my hands and they opened the tent door. Then I arose and crossed over to Fière's bed. The first light of day fell on a pale, shrunken face. It was Death."

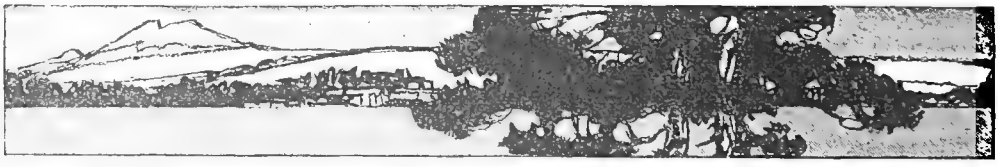
HELP ARRIVES

SO, ON the very threshold of success, one was taken and the other left, a shattered wreck. Far from all aid and alone with his native servants, Lieutenant Graetz faced the situation as only a man of his caliber could. One of the natives was dispatched at once to Kasama, in northeastern Rhodesia, to summon help. This was the nearest point inhabited by white men.

Doctor G. F. Randall, the district surgeon, and Mr. Cookson, the magistrate of Kasama, marched day and night for two days to his relief. Hastily further operations were performed under the most difficult circumstances. And then, on an improvised stretcher, Graetz was carried to Kasama. One can imagine the painful journey, a journey rendered all the more pitiful because of the loss of his trusted assistant. The relief party buried poor Fière at Charenama, but later his body will be brought to Kasama and re-interred there by the white fathers of the Catholic Mission.

TO MOST men, this disastrous setback would prove an insurmountable hindrance to the completion of the program; but with Lieutenant Graetz it was different. He has started again and will continue his journey until it is completed or until death claims him. He intends to reach the mouth of the Congo by the end of the year. A man of superlative grit, who flinches from no dangers and who knows not what the words fear and defeat mean!

He is entitled to a place in history beside Livingstone, Stanley, Gordon and the others, yet probably he will be forgotten except by those who fully appreciate all he has achieved for science. When we read at the end of the year that he has traversed the Dark Continent from East to West, we shall know that he has done what he said he would do, despite the difficulties in his path. Shall we all recognize what this means? Some may—those who, perchance, have done similar deeds, or those who know the African Continent and all its lurking dangers. Do not forget that lonely, mangled form lying beneath the earth in far away Kasama. You, who have never heard of such a place—and by far the greater majority have not—may draw out your map of Africa and search it minutely for the name, and yet not find it. But there in the wilds of northeastern Rhodesia lies the body of that other man who was striving with might and main to finish the work he had set out to do—to cross Africa by motor-launch.



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The Master Criminal

The Story of the Raid on Wealth

By C. H. Baily

THE ban of silence now has been lifted; death has claimed the man responsible for all the trouble. I now am free to tell the whole story, and to give to the world the true inside history of the greatest and most mysterious series of crimes the United States ever has experienced. I refer to the blackmailing mysteries of eighteen years ago—mysteries that puzzled the greatest criminologists of the world, and caused such a reign of terror in the Eastern States in 1914.

The story is of such intense interest that it needs no literary embellishments. I simply am going to write a running account of the occurrences and let the world judge the master criminal—and myself. I shall attempt neither to accuse nor defend him. He is gone now where accusations and defenses matter not at all.

My part in the blackmailing conspiracy began one morning in July when my client, Major John Burke, the retired millionaire manufacturer, entered my law office on lower Broadway, in a state of some excitement and laid a letter on my desk.

"Read that, Jameson," he said, "and tell me what you think of it."

I picked up the letter. It was typewritten on bond paper, such as is sold at every first-class stationer's. The envelope protecting the letter was postmarked at the Madison Square Station, New York City, and the time-stamp showed it was mailed at noon the day before. Here is the letter:

New York City, July 12.

Major John Burke,
Burke Lodge, Yonkers, N. Y.

DEAR MAJOR:

Your income last year amounted to $132,840.90, from the following sources:

Interest and dividends on stocks and bonds	$95,000.00
Rents from city properties	27,000.00
Rents from houses in Yonkers	4,000.00
Interest on bank-accounts	3,500.00
Royalties on patented valve	2,200.00
All other sources	1,140.90
Total gross income	$132,840.90

This income is exclusive of certain successful speculations on Wall Street that netted you, over and above any speculative losses, about $20,000, and exclusive of the sale of an apartment house in the Bronx, which netted you $47,000. This additional $67,000 has been invested by you in municipal bonds and therefore, for last year at least, became an addition to your capital rather than to your income.

In the last year your household and personal expenses footed up to $68,500. You lived in luxury, and it is reasonable to suppose that you spent all the money you found it comfortable and convenient to spend.

A careful investigation of your affairs shows that, for twelve years last past, you have failed to spend the interest of your invested money. You are spending all you conveniently can and yet, without the slightest effort on your part, you annually are becoming more wealthy.

This situation annoys us. You are producing nothing whatever. You are doing no useful work whatever. Yet you are becoming richer and richer.

We believe that no man with an assured life income, engaged in no business that jeopardizes his capital, has any moral right to have annually more than he and his family can possibly spend. Last year your income was $132,840.90. Deduct therefrom your expenses—$68,500—and there is left,

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for one year, $64,340.90 of money that you could not spend, and which has to be thrown back into your reserve capital. You found no use for this money. We have found a use for it—a very excellent use.

You will deposit in the —— National Bank of the City of New York, in your own name, the sum of $64,340.90. You then will draw a check for this amount payable to James Walter Brothers. You will have this check certified. You will mail this check to James Walter Brothers, General Delivery, General P. O., New York City.

The same procedure will be gone through next year. In the meantime please attend to this matter at once and save us both annoyance.

With kindest regards, Major, we are,

Faithfully yours,
THE DIRECTORATE.

I looked into the Major's angry eyes.

"Are these figures approximately correct?" I asked.

"Approximately!" exploded Burke. "—— it, man, they are correct to a penny! Not a soul knew what these figures were—not even myself. I verified 'em after getting this letter. It's this specific data relative to my affairs that convinces me these scoundrels are in earnest, and are going to seriously blackmail me somehow."

I touched a button and summoned my stenographer.

"Bring me the morning papers," I directed.

In a casual glance over the papers that day I had noticed something about blackmailing letters having been received by several persons. I found the item after a little searching. It was in an obscure part of the paper, and read as follows:

BLACKMAILING LETTERS RECEIVED

SEVERAL WEALTHY NEW YORKERS FIND PECULIAR DEMAND FOR TRIBUTE IN MAIL. POLICE THINK IT SOME HARMLESS LUNATIC

The city detective department and the postal authorities have been placed in possession of several score of letters signed "The Directorate," and addressed to wealthy men in New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, demanding large sums of money in the form of certified checks.

All the letters are well typewritten and all were mailed from the Madison Square post-office. The communications, although they contain no threats, show unusual knowledge of the personal affairs of those to whom they are addressed. While the police think the letters the work of some harmless lunatic, the postal inspectors appear to take a trifle more serious view of the matter, and are unwilling to advance any theories at this time.

I showed this item to Major Burke.

"Possibly some crank," I suggested.

"You can see for yourself how silly it would be for a man to try to get a certified check out of the post-office and cash it without being apprehended."

"But how on earth did they come by these figures?" snapped Burke. "I tell you, Jameson, there's something behind all this!"

"If so," I replied, "all we can do at this time is to keep quiet and await developments. I'll keep this letter and perhaps turn it over to the police. But my advice is to go slow. It may be a practical joke, after all."

HOWEVER, the evening papers put new light on the affair. It seems that the letters had gone out by the thousands. Evidently it was the work of an organized gang, for all the letters showed inside knowledge of the workings of the private business of their recipients. Scores of stenographers must have worked on the letters. The wording of each was different. Hundreds of men must have been quietly investigating the affairs of the men selected as victims.

Practically every very wealthy man in three States had received one of the communications. The possible plot, ridiculous on the face of it, might, all thinking people saw, really be serious. The "story," as told in the evening papers, was everywhere eagerly discussed.

According to the general instructions embodied in the letters, all mail was to be sent to James Walter Brothers at Pittsburg, Philadelphia, Newark, Trenton, New York City, Syracuse, and Buffalo. Banks in each of these cities were designated as institutions where money could be deposited and checks be drawn on.

Detectives were at once stationed, on night and day shifts, at the post-offices in the cities mentioned. Decoy letters were sent to James Walter Brothers. Nobody called for them. Post-offices everywhere were closely watched that it might be detected who was mailing the letters. Ten days went by. Then came a new and startling development. Major Burke, in common with hundreds of others, received the following letter, postmarked at the Chicago general post-office:

Our bookkeeping department reports that there is no record of your having forwarded your donation, as per our request of several days ago. Possibly

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this merely is an oversight on your part. It is a regrettable one, however, as it puts us both to some trouble.

The records show that you are the owner of a vacant house at No. 423 Blank Street, Yonkers, N. Y. This house is insured for $1,500 in the North Star Fire Insurance Corporation. If your donation is not received by us on or before July 26, this house will catch afire at one o'clock on the morning of July 27, and probably will burn to the ground. The North Star Fire Insurance Corporation has so been notified.

Allow us, dear Major, to offer you every expression of esteem.

THE DIRECTORATE.

In the same mail that this letter was received, the Major received a curt notification from the North Star Fire Insurance Corporation to the effect that it would at once cancel its policy on the Yonkers property. The company, at least, was taking no chances on "The Directorate." Hundreds on hundreds of policies were so canceled in the three States because of communications sent out broadcast.

Major Burke's letter we immediately turned over to the authorities at Yonkers, at the same time sending a copy to the post-office department. The Major, in his own handwriting, sent off a decoy letter to James Walter Brothers. It never was called for. During the ensuing days two police officers and a plain-clothes man were constantly stationed at the Blank Street house.

On the evening of July 26, these were reinforced by two additional city policemen and three private detectives. At exactly one o'clock in the morning the structure caught fire from the inside, and in one hour was a smoking ruin, although the fire department made every effort to quench the blaze. The department was handicapped through the fact that there were four other incendiary fires in Yonkers at the same hour, the property in every case belonging to wealthy Yonkers men who all had received prior warning of the work of destruction.

The next morning—or rather the same morning—the newspapers devoted little space to anything save the three thousand six hundred incendiary fires that broke out at the same hour in all parts of New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. The East—the world, for that matter—was panic-stricken. Business was at a standstill. Insurance rates went clean out of sight. People talked of a conspiracy to put the torch to the entire Atlantic seaboard.

Many arrests of suspicious characters were made. Against none of the suspects, however, was there any real case. How the many fires started in guarded buildings, and who started them, was a mystery too great for even the splendid detective ability engaged on all sides.

Some there were who suspected an insurance plot to increase rates. This theory secured many followers because of the previous notices of cancelation. But in view of subsequent developments the companies were quickly cleared by public opinion.

Thinking to put a stop to further depredations, many men of wealth sent checks as ordered to James Walter Brothers. They remained uncalled for in the several post-offices.

THE United States secret-service force was detailed on the case through influence brought by the post-office department, and every large private-detective agency in the East was retained by cities, States, men of wealth and insurance companies. By this time it was believed that the whole thing was an anarchist plot. Many to this day believe such to be the case.

In the midst of the excitement, the persecuted millionaires received letters similar in purport to the one I quote below and which came to my client, Major Burke:

DEAR MAJOR:

We regret the wanton destruction of your property as much as do you. It was an unnecessary sacrifice—unnecessary save for the fact that you are so very obtuse.

We want your certified check for $64,349.90 at once. We are aware that there is a letter directed to us from you in the New York post-office. This letter does not contain a check, however, so we will not trouble to call for it.

A kidnaper is an extremely low form of criminal. We do not like to stoop to kidnaping. Shall we have to do so in your case?

Your five-year-old daughter, Mabel—your only child—is a very sweet and attractive little girl. Certainly we wish her no harm any more than we wish you harm. But if, six days from date, we have not received your check, we will take away your daughter Mabel. There is no place in the whole civilized world you can hide her where we can not find her and carry out this threat. No matter how closely your home, or wherever Mabel may be sent, is guarded, we will carry out our threat. This is the final warning.

THE DIRECTORATE.

More than three thousand similar letters went out through the mails. Men were

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threatened with the kidnaping of their children, their nephews and nieces, their grandchildren, any juvenile member of their family of whom they were fond. The date on which the children were to be taken was given in many of the letters, the very hour in some.

Words can not describe the terrible panic that ensued. Parents in all walks of life trembled for the safety of their little ones. Frantic men and women everywhere implored the protection of the police. Private detectives by the thousands were employed to guard the threatened children. Cordons of police surrounded the homes of wealthy men. Parents spirited their offspring away to places of concealment in the night. Every man looked upon his neighbor with suspicion. It was a time of terrific stress —a time no man can forget, no matter how long he may live.

Major and Mrs. Burke were frantic, but the old man was "game."

"I'll fight it out," he said to me. "I'll pay no blackmail, and they'll not get the child, either. They'll get bullets instead, the cowards!"

But not all the threatened men were as plucky as the Major. It later was estimated that nearly a thousand, or a quarter and more, of those against whom threats were made quietly submitted to the imposition and sent their certified checks according to instructions. But these still maintained a guard over their homes, although no harm ever later came to any of their children.

Twenty reliable men, armed with rifles and revolvers, were stationed night and day about the house and grounds of Burke Lodge in Yonkers. Never was a child guarded as was Mabel. I spent the intervening days at Yonkers myself, carrying, for almost the first time in my life, a loaded revolver.

On the night of the sixth day the guards were doubled. Forty men patroled the house and grounds. Mabel was kept in the nursery on the second floor, and heavy iron gratings were fastened over the windows. Two women, tried and trusty servants, were constantly in the room with the child. Electric lights blazed all over the house. Major Burke, a revolver in his coat pocket, took up his vigil for the night on a chair placed across the open door of Mabel's room. There was but this entrance to the room. Unless the house was dynamited, and even this had been guarded against, it was not within the bounds of reason that harm could come to the little girl.

The nursery windows commanded a view of the stables. At twenty minutes of eleven o'clock that night loud cries were heard from the direction of the stables, and one of the barns burst into flames. The women guards of Mabel rushed to a window to see what caused all the commotion. Mabel was standing at the one other window. Major Burke still kept his post at the doorway.

Suddenly the two women looked toward where Mabel had been standing. She was gone! One of them shrieked. The Major, as alert as at any time that evening, pulled his revolver from his pocket and rushed into the room. He had not, up to that time, noticed that Mabel was not in sight, as he had been sitting with his back toward her looking for some signs of any strange person up and down the brilliantly lighted hallway. Mabel had not passed him. That much seemed certain. A careful search of the child's room showed that she was not there.

The Major's cries brought a dozen of us to the room. We ripped up the rug in search of a secret trap-door. None existed. We shattered the walls of the room with hatchets and axes, suspecting some hidden panel. None existed. The iron bars of the windows were intact. She could not have gone through them. They were but three inches apart.

Had Mabel dissolved in thin air her disappearance would have been no more mysterious or startling.

Then Mrs. Burke rushed hysterically into the room. She was holding aloft a little slip of paper:

"I found it on the stairs! I found it on the stairs!" she kept crying.

I snatched it from her hand. There were typewritten words on the slip:

> We give you six days in which to send that check. Mabel will be returned three hours after receipt of said check.
>
> THE DIRECTORATE.

II

I HAVE heard it said of the few days that followed that people, while in a frenzy of excitement were also in such a state of mental collapse, on

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account of the long nervous strain to which they had been subjected, that they were unable to appreciate, in its entirety all that happened. The thing was so stupendous that it stunned them. Men gathered on street corners and, with blanched faces, discussed the situation in whispers. All went armed. Business was practically at a standstill in the three States in which the crimes took place.

Authentic reports showed that two thousand five hundred and sixty-two children, all closely guarded, completely disappeared within twenty-four hours. With but one exception, when men were threatened and did not pay up beforehand, some juvenile member of the family was taken. This exception was Dorothy, the infant daughter of Manning, the famous Pittsburg millionaire.

The day before the crimes Dorothy was taken ill with some childish ailment. No effort apparently was made to remove her, and the next morning Manning received a letter informing him that the little girl was safe until she fully recovered. Manning's check went to the backmailers that same day.

Where had the children gone? No one could guess. In the heart of crowded cities, guarded by the most finely organized police forces in the world, every avenue of escape shut off, and yet the children were missing, and behind them was left no clue to their whereabouts. No one could be found who actually saw a child taken. No one could be found who had seen one of the children after it had disappeared. For all we knew, the earth might have opened and swallowed the little ones. In such a state of wonderment were we that we would not have been surprised had we found that the earth had swallowed the innocent victims of one of the foulest plots any of us ever had known of.

"The days of black magic have returned," said one paper editorially. "We stopped burning witches too soon."

Seriously, another great paper advanced the theory that the entire country was under a hypnotic spell—that what had happened had not happened, because the impossible never happened.

The efforts of the various police bodies were superhuman. Picked men from all parts of the United States and Canada were sent to New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey to reinforce the regular police force. Hundreds of arrests of "suspects" were made. They were dark days for strangers to any city who could not give a straight account of their movements. Every one believed that the plot would extend farther and take in the entire country. Cases of insanity among women increased a thousand per cent. The United States was frantic—panic-stricken.

The police "third degree" was given to thousands with unusual embellishments. Not a shred of definite information anywhere was secured.

All his pride gone, and looking like an aged and broken man, Major Burke, accompanied by myself, the morning after the tragedy went to the city and deposited in his name, in the —— National Bank of New York, the sum of $64,340.90. He then drew a check for this amount, had it certified, placed it in an envelope, sealed the envelope and with his own hand mailed it in the general post-office directed to James Walter Brothers.

When he dropped the letter in the post-office, the building was literally filled with plain-clothes men, and I will guarantee that these men, within five minutes after we left the building, had examined the envelope. We reported mailing the letter to the police chief at the Mulberry Street headquarters, and immediately took the train for Yonkers.

"THE DIRECTORATE" had said that, within three hours after mailing the check Mabel would be returned. We doubted it, but doubting, still hoped it would be possible—still believed it possible, I think. No sane man could conceive that the blackmailers could get that check from the post-office without being arrested. No sane man could see how, even if the check were secured, it could be of any use to the criminals.

The whole world knew the name of James Walter Brothers now. No man on earth would cash any check made out in his name without summoning the police. There was a reward of $100,000 offered for the arrest and conviction of James Walter Brothers. And, knowing all this, it was just as reasonable to suppose that Mabel could be brought back according to promise, as it was to believe that she had been taken away under the very eyes of the

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splendid guard set over her. And we knew she had been so taken away.

Never shall I forget that luncheon at Burke Lodge. The Major and I sat alone at the table. Mrs. Burke was in her own room, prostrated. We were waited upon by a white-faced and trembling maid, a young woman who loved Mabel dearly. We ate practically nothing. We exchanged no words. We were simply waiting.

We had timed ourselves after we left the post-office. It had been exactly eleven o'clock when we had mailed the check. We had arrived at Yonkers exactly at one o'clock. We were trying to drag out that luncheon until two o'clock. At that hour, or before, Mabel was to be returned—perhaps.

Thirty and more men were on guard in the house and grounds, but all of them hidden from view. A casual examination of the house would convince any one that it was deserted by all save the regular servants and the immediate members of the family. Yet no person could enter the house or the grounds without coming under the inspection of an armed man.

I was aware of the fact that behind a screen in the dining-room wherein we were sitting was a detective, for I believed that I was under suspicion in common with almost every man in three States. Nor did I mind the suspicion. It was no suspicion of Major Burke's. I knew that. Rather was it the precaution of detectives whose duty it was to suspect all at such a time.

We had finished our pitiful effort to eat luncheon. I was smoking a cigarette and Major Burke was making an attempt to touch a match to a cigar with fingers that trembled like an aspen leaf. The three hours were almost up. It lacked but ten minutes of the time.

Suddenly, from up-stairs, we heard a woman shriek. We rushed out of the dining-room and up the broad stairway, clearing three steps at a bound.

At the head of the stairway stood the Burkes' aged housekeeper, the tears streaming down her face, shaking so that she could scarcely stand and pointing toward the door of Mabel's room.

"In there!" she sobbed. "In there!"

We rushed toward Mabel's room. The door was open. Major Burke was ahead. I heard him sob as he saw what was there. I entered, dreading what I might see.

Lying asleep on her little white bed, and dressed as she was when she was taken, lay Mabel. In her sleep she looked as if she never had known what fear was, and as if no strange hands ever had touched her. Her lips were curved in a smile. She was breathing quietly and regularly, and as a normal child should breathe in a sound sleep.

I ran out of the room. A dozen detectives who had heard the aged housekeeper's cry were coming from all portions of the house. I questioned them. They had seen nothing out of the ordinary. No strange person had been about.

If the child had been taken away by magic, surely by magic had she been returned.

Snuggled close in the arms of her father, who had awakened her with his caresses, and with her mother kneeling beside her, Mabel told all she knew of her mysterious disappearance.

"I was," she said, "standing by the window watching the fire. Then I woke up when Daddy kissed me."

THAT was all she knew. She had no recollection of any one taking her away. It was uncanny, awe-inspiring.

And if Mabel could throw no light on the mystery, neither could any of the other children who had been held for ransom. They remembered waking up in their own homes. That was all. Physicians could detect no sign of any sleeping potion having been administered the children, but of course each one of them must have been given something. Asleep or awake when they disappeared, they remembered nothing.

All the children were returned, for all those who were ordered to forward certified checks did so. Had they been willing to sacrifice their little ones, the people would have mobbed them. They all submitted to the blackmailers promptly. Not one of the children who had been taken away suffered in the slightest degree from his or her experience. They evidently had been treated very tenderly.

During the few days' breathing spell following the return of the last of the children, the nation was able to look the problem straight in the face, and surely no more puzzling one ever confronted the people. A series of great crimes had been committed

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for—what? Thousands of wealthy men had contributed checks, the face value of which aggregated perhaps $70,000,000. These checks never had been called for at the post-offices to which they were mailed addressed to James Walter Brothers. If, by any human means, these checks could have been taken from the post-offices, they could not be cashed. It had been a tremendous and fearsome series of crimes. Yet, so far as any one could see, they had, for the perpetrators, been absolutely profitless crimes.

For five days the letters carrying the checks lay in the various post-offices. Then, as they had been uncalled for, the Postmaster-General issued an order that they should be returned to the writers upon sure identification.

The postmaster at New York was a warm personal friend of mine. I visited him in company with Major Burke. He took us down-stairs to the proper department and asked for the letter Major Burke had mailed to James Walter Brothers. It had the Major's name and address engraved on one corner of the envelope. It was given him. Major Burke ripped open the envelope. The check was gone! In its place was a neat receipt, the size of his check. The envelope showed no signs of having been tampered with.

Of the three thousand and odd checks addressed to James Walter Brothers to several post-offices, all were missing. Receipts had been substituted for them. And these receipts were signed simply "The Directorate."

After the first shock of this last offense was over, the public was more relieved than anything else. Here at last was something tangible. At last direct suspicion rested upon a comparatively few people—the postal clerks who had handled this mail. Scores of these were arrested and put through the "third degree." Failing to break down, they were put in jail on suspicion while the detectives centered their energies to finding proof of guilt against the accused.

And just when the people thought they saw a ray of light and public excitement had somewhat abated, the final, crashing blow came—a blow that seemed to exonerate the post-office men and add to the dense fog of mystery that surrounded the entire affair.

IN BROAD daylight, between the hours of two and three o'clock on the afternoon of August 18, under the watchful eyes of hundreds of bank clerks and scores of detectives, and while the banks were transacting more business than at any other time of the day, the vaults of the —— National Bank of New York, and the other designated depositories in Pittsburg, Philadelphia, Newark, Trenton, Syracuse and Buffalo, were looted and from them cash in the amount of more than $70,000,000 taken. In exchange for the money were left, in neat packages, the certified checks made out on that particular bank and payable to James Walter Brothers.

Not one cent outside the amounts called for on the checks was touched, not a suspicious-looking stranger had been seen about the banks during the robberies. They all occurred at the same time. The blackmailers simply had helped themselves to the money represented by checks. Thousands on thousands of dollars, easy of access after the robbers once had gained access to the vaults, were not touched.

The whole civilized world stood aghast with wonder. Never in the history of the world had such dramatic success crowned any criminal effort. The police were in despair.

IT IS almost useless to try even to outline the work of the police, the United States secret-service operatives and the postal inspectors during the ensuing six months, for to all of you it is almost as well known as to myself. At any rate every one knows that their efforts to unravel the tangled skein of the mystery won for them the admiration of people all over the world. That their every effort resulted in blank failure was in no way their fault. They were combating an organization more powerful than the law.

A month after the robbery of the banks, if robbery it actually was irregularly to cash correctly drawn checks, the post-office men who had been in custody were released. Nothing could be found against them. With one or two exceptions their characters and private lives were above reproach, and although some of them, if not all, actually had handled the letters with the valuable enclosures, it could not be proven that they had anything to do with

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removing the enclosures. More, it was not possible that they could have done so without detection.

Doubtless the bank end of the affair tended to help clear the postal employees. They could not, of course, have participated in the banking raids, nor could they, it was shown, have acted in collusion with the employees of the banks. The affair was of such wide scope that the detectives could see no opportunity for collusion among minor bank and post-office officials.

How had the vaults of the banks been entered? An examination of the vaults showed, in every case, a few minute scratches about the locks of the inner and outer doors. But these were found also in two cases where the vaults had not been closed at all. They might, therefore, mean much or they might mean little.

Assistance from the inside was out of the question. Throughout the entire six months detectives had been closely watching the every move of each and every bank clerk and official of the institutions that figured in the kidnaping mystery. It was conclusively shown that, during the hour in which the vaults were entered, nobody attached to any of the banks was near the vaults. It was the rush hour, and all were at their posts of duty. It seemed impossible that the money could have been carried out of the banks in any manner. Yet it was gone.

A few bank clerks whose personal habits were not up to par were placed under arrest, but not sufficient evidence could be found against them even to hold them for grand juries. Every man in the banks was kept under surveillance for months, but nothing came of that. The money had disappeared and no trace of it could be found. In a test case the Supreme Court of New York decided that, although irregularly cashed, the ones who drew the checks and not the banks had to stand the loss, so the banks suffered nothing save perhaps in reputation, and the majority of people held them blameless. It was generally believed that some power more than human was at work.

In despair the crime detectors dropped all their later investigations and began again right at the beginning. They started first with the threatening letters, employing experts on typewriting to see whether any clue could be found as to the writer. These men were, however, entirely at sea. They knew that experienced men-stenographers wrote the letters and that they were written on a certain standard make of machine. At least twenty men had worked upon them. There were no peculiarities of spelling, punctuation or diction to afford a clue.

Of course the paper on which the letters were written underwent a minute inspection, but it was simply high-grade bond paper, of which hundreds of tons annually are sold. Stationers all over the United States failed to report any unusual amount having been s ld to any one concern that could possibly be mixed up in the frauds. The manufacturers found no record of any direct sale to concerns other than those engaged in selling stationery. The most exhaustive search failed to reveal the identity of those who mailed the letters at the various points.

As a means of tracing the criminals the signature proved valueless.

THERE was one clue that, at one stage of the game, the detectives placed great hopes on. Scattered about the floors of the robbed banks were minute scraps of tissue paper of unusually light weight. When this point was made public a large number of people remembered having seen similar scraps in and about the houses from which the children had been kidnaped. I am afraid to say how many theories were built up about those bits of paper. They were put under a microscope and also chemically examined. They showed no signs of having contained any chemical, although it did seem as if they had burst open under pressure. As a means of tracing the perpetrators of the crimes the paper became practically valueless when the report of a paper manufacturer was made public.

They were the product of the Eastern Accessory Company of Maine. More than four hundred thousand rolls and bundles of this paper were annually sold by this company. It could be purchased in almost any part of the United States, Canada, South America and Europe.

Five months after the banks were robbed the detectives—Federal, municipal, private and amateur—gave up the job as hopeless. Hundreds of thousands of dollars had been expended, and when the affair was put in the list of undetected crimes everybody

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breathed more freely. For nearly a year the people had been wondering and worrying about it, and they wanted very, very much to write it into the history of the things that were past.

III

AND now what seems to me to be the strangest part of all this strange affair is how I, only a fairly well known New York lawyer, entirely lacking the "detective instinct," came to discover the entire plot and run it to earth. Thinking over the affair soberly in these later years it seems inconceivable to me that I alone should have hit upon the tiny clue to the entire mystery. Yet I did hit upon this clue, ran it down, and so am enabled, through this confession, to clear it up.

In Major Burke's letters, and in three others the experts permitted me to examine, the small letter "j" appeared several times—eighteen times, to be exact. Twelve times out of the eighteen, this letter "j" was perfect. Six times it showed a slight, a very slight, imperfection. Six times there was a tiny break in the letter. When the letter had been struck more lightly than usual, this break or blank space in the middle of the letter appeared. When struck with the usual force the letter was perfect. In all the four letters I examined, the experts pronounced that the same operator had written them.

Why I noticed this in some of the letters I do not know. Certain it is that the experts passed it over, and, at the time, it seemed so insignificant to me that I was ashamed to draw anybody's attention to it. But somehow the thing stuck in my mind, and for months I could not rid myself of the trick, while reading a typewritten communication, of looking for a broken and imperfect letter "j" in it. I often laughed at myself for my folly, and continued to indulge it.

Now, to make subsequent developments perfectly clear I must, I fear, go back a few years prior to the time of which I write—that is, as far back as when I was a law student at Columbia.

I was at that time, and am now to a certain degree, rather an enthusiastic lodge man. When I was a college student I joined the Order of the Delphic Oracle, an order, save for the Freemasons, probably the most influential in the United States. Its membership was largely of a thinking class of men, and although it numbered its memberships by the tens of thousands, particularly in the East, it was difficult to become affiliated with the society. The secret work of the Delphic Oracle is simply magnificent, and there is nothing in the ritual of the order but what is inspiring to a degree.

There are but three degrees in the order, known as the General Lodge, the Inner Lodge, and the Esoteric Lodge. To obtain the last degree one must be a member of the order for fifteen years or longer. I was a General Lodge man only, then—and now.

The Supreme President of the order was Dr. Josiah Merriman, of Baltimore, a wonderfully well educated man who had traveled all over the world, was highly thought of in scientific circles and was considered one of the leading writers of the day on social and economic questions. He had half a dozen college and university degrees conferred upon him because of his scientific work, and although I had never met the man I had heard glowing accounts of his personality.

He was about sixty years of age, but splendidly preserved. I had had considerable correspondence with Dr. Merriman relative to lodge matters, and I fancy my name was not unknown to him. At any rate, on two occasions he had, by letter, requested me to handle certain legal matters connected with the Supreme Lodge pending in the New York courts.

IT WAS on the afternoon of the twelfth of February—I never shall forget the date—that I made the great discovery. Business had called me up to the Metropolitan Building. It was a raw afternoon. There was a sleety rain falling, driven by a hard wind. I had transacted my business in the Metropolitan Building and was standing at the entrance of that structure, buttoning my overcoat and drawing on my gloves preparatory to making a dash to Broadway, there to catch a car to my office.

As I stood there, muffled in my overcoat, two men stepped out of the building behind me, conversing earnestly. As they struck the cold outer air where the wind was whistling about the building entrance, they raised their voices, scarcely appreciating how loudly

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they were talking. As I buttoned my glove, a sentence uttered by one of them caught my attention. Involuntarily I strained my ears to hear more.

Distinctly I heard the other man's reply to the remark made by the first. Then the men, turning up their coat-collars, passed me and started out in the storm. In an instant I recognized them both. One was Supreme Secretary of the Order of the Delphic Oracle and a man I had several times met, and the other man I knew as being high up in the counsels of the Esoteric Lodge.

For perhaps five minutes I stood almost stunned, fully exposed to the driving storm which I heeded not at all. The words I had heard might mean nothing at all. Yet again they might mean everything. They might hold the key to the great kidnaping mysteries.

A cab was passing. I hailed it, and instructed the driver to take me to my office-building. I wanted to get somewhere where I could think clearly.

Miss Clark, my stenographer, handed me a little bundle of letters that the postman had brought while I was out. I carried them into my private office. On the top of the pile was an envelope bearing the insignia of the Order of the Delphic Oracle. I saw it was from the president's office in Baltimore. I ripped it open and read the letter, a letter dealing with some comparatively unimportant business connected with the local Oracle lodge of which I was treasurer.

I was reaching toward my letter-file in order to file the communication away, when some subconscious thought prompted me to examine it again. The third word of the letter was "just." From force of habit I scrutinized the small "j." Then I took the letter over to the window and examined it again. Like a flash the full meaning of the words I had overheard in front of the Metropolitan Building came into my mind. I pushed the call-button under my desk. Miss Clark came in quickly.

"Phone and find out what time the next train leaves for Baltimore," I instructed her.

In five minutes she was back:

"You can catch one in an hour, over the Pennsylvania road," she reported.

"I'm going to Baltimore," I said. "I may be gone for several days. Have Willis [my law clerk] get a postponement on any court business that may come up."

I slept that night in Baltimore.

IV

AT NINE o'clock next morning I was confronting Dr. Merriman in his private office.

"Mr. President," I was asking, "what part did the Order of the Delphic Oracle, as an organization, take in the recent kidnaping cases?"

Although I had heard many word-pictures of Dr. Merriman, none of them quite did him justice. He was a courtly, polished gentleman of the old school, and of a more commanding and at the same time genial presence than any man I had ever met. His hair and mustache were snow-white, but in figure he seemed more sturdy than most men half his age. My abrupt question must have startled him. If it did he made no sign.

"You had best sit down, Mr. Jameson," he quietly said, eying me keenly from under his heavy eyebrows, "and we can then talk far more comfortably. Now just what is it that you are anxious to know?"

"I am convinced, or about so," I said, "that some of the highest officials of this organization, including yourself, instigated the blackmailing mystery that has turned the country upside down during the past few months. What I now wish to determine is to what extent the order of which I am a member, as an order, is implicated."

"Before answering your question, sir, I think I have the right to ask whom and what you represent in this matter."

"Myself alone."

"Do you question me as a lawyer, or as a member of an order whose secrets you are sworn to guard?"

"I question you, Dr. Merriman, as a citizen who has seen crime committed. It is your privilege to convince me that my duty in the premises is greater to the order than it is to society; that is the best I can do under all the circumstances."

"I think, Mr. Jameson, that, coming here in the way you do, I am entitled first to know upon what information you have based your surmises. Even before you furnish me with such information, however, I will inform you that, understanding men as I do, I shall tell you everything I know. If a man of your caliber decides that we have been so entirely wrong that his duty lies rather with society than with us, then we have been so far wrong that society owes

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us punishment. I think, though, that after I finish what I have to say you will believe that your first duty—now at least—lies with this order."

I outlined briefly to Doctor Merriman my connection with the blackmailing mystery, told him of the conversation I had overheard at the entrance of the Metropolitan Building and of the tiny clue, the broken letter "j," that finally had convinced me of the participation of himself in the crimes.

For fully five minutes after I finished my story, Doctor Merriman sat quietly gazing out of a window. Then he spoke, slowly and without emotion, making every word count.

"You are a lawyer," he said, "not a student of economics. As a lawyer your sympathies probably are with what we will, for lack of a better term, call the privileged classes. Your aim is to uphold the established order of things, for the legal profession depends for its living on the established order of things. In a society where there are no privileged classes and where every man has a square deal, there will be about ninety per cent. less law and some ninety-two per cent. fewer lawyers.

"The higher degrees of the Order of the Delphic Oracle do not worship at the shrine of the established order of things. The established order created, and intends to perpetuate, extreme poverty and extreme wealth. There is no more need for one than for the other. Because there are both, the United States soon might see civil war—war between capital and labor. We intend to ignore the conventions to the extent of avoiding such a conflict.

"If, in the avoidance of such conflict, some of us go to the penitentiary for instigating what is called the blackmailing mystery, why, to the penitentiary will we go and without whining. But I do not think we will go. Up to this time we seem to have, rather successfully, blinded that law you lawyers hold as such a sacred thing.

"This order carried through the blackmailing cases. The first thing you will say is that we did harm. We did. We caused thousands of mothers and fathers throughout the land to suffer the torments of the damned. We caused suicides and women went insane. It was not pretty. It was not nice. No one regrets it more than I. It was *necessary*. We not only were securing money but we were teaching a lesson.

"What was this lesson we taught? I will tell you. We selected men who had so much money that they could not spend the interest of it. They had more money than they possibly needed. We did not take any of their principal. We took simply some of their surplus interest. By doing so we took from them not one thing that they needed. It cost us perhaps a million dollars to do this. We took away seventy times more than we put in. And every cent that we took out we devoted to alleviating the condition of the poor. We made self-respecting, self-supporting citizens out of perhaps ten thousand men and women who otherwise would always have been a hindrance instead of a help to society. And what we did we did on a permanent basis. It was not charity. It was scientific upbuilding. And it was merely a start. We have only just started. Our work is all before us.

"So-called students of economics will tell you a thousand different reasons for the present deplorable industrial and social conditions. There is but one fundamental reason: Greed. Eliminate greed and half the battle is won. In a hundred years it might be possible to *argue* men out of a state of greed, although I doubt it. In one year it is possible to *frighten* them out of it. We showed the greedy ones, or, I should say, the most greedy ones, that before this unknown force behind the kidnaping mysteries, their vaunted power was as weak as a blade of grass in the path of a hurricane.

"Before us they were as nothing. We represented Society. Society showed its teeth and bit. They did not know how Society mustered up the courage to bite. Because they did not know, they were afraid. Mr. Jameson, in ten years, as a result of the campaign of education we are quietly carrying on, as a result of the funds that, year after year, we will milk from the wickedly rich and without resorting to any more kidnaping crimes, there will be no more wickedly rich. In ten years a man will consider it not only a menace from an unknown enemy to own a million dollars, but he will consider it a disgrace.

"We caused fear and suffering and death. We averted a civil war that would carry with it ten thousand times more suffering and death. I, for instance, made myself a criminal less than a year ago. Would I not

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have been ten thousand times more a criminal had I sat back inactive and watched the approach of that inevitable war? Already I have answered that question to my own satisfaction. Before many years are out I will answer it to yours. I do not expect, in one hour, to revolutionize your lifelong attitude regarding the established order of things."

BEYOND a doubt I was sadly "rattled." I had come to Baltimore fully expecting to have to fight for every shred of information secured. Never had it occurred to me that the money obtained by blackmail might have been put to a noble instead of an ignoble use. Dr. Merriman's calm way of acknowledging participation in the affair, both by himself and by the order, an acknowledgment that, did I wish to turn traitor, might put hundreds behind the bars, staggered me. Above all, the mystery of the affair increased rather than decreased. The order was party to the crime, yet I, a very active member of the order, had, prior to now, no inkling of it.

The president was quietly smiling over my so-evident confusion.

"Would you like to have the details?" he asked.

I merely bowed. Actually I was too puzzled to speak at the moment.

"Three years ago," said the president, "the idea that was carried to such a successful conclusion a few months ago was conceived. A majority of the members of the Inner and Esoteric degrees were taken into the plot. They were all picked men. General Lodge men were excluded because the great majority of them were too new to the order for us to place implicit confidence in them. We thought, for safety's sake, it would be better to exclude them all. They were not needed, for we had sufficient workers in the other two degrees.

"More than thirty thousand men in all conditions of life were in this plot. We confined our operations to New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey because our membership was more concentrated there and those States held the men of greatest wealth.

"We carefully picked our 'victims.' To each one of them ten or a dozen of our picked members were assigned. For months their duty was to watch these men, ascertain all the particulars regarding their financial transactions and any other information of value. Some of these men were personal and business associates of the men whose friendship they were betraying for the greater good. It was not difficult to obtain the information we sought. It simply required time and patience. We had sufficient funds at our disposal to employ detective talent and all other talent as it was needed. I will say now, however, that none of our members was working under pay. Their services were voluntarily given.

"I will go into no details, Mr. Jameson, regarding our organization, but the task, as you readily can see, took an immense amount of work, patience and a knowledge of human nature. One false step might have ruined everything. We had to be very careful. When the plan came to be worked out we had with us bankers, lawyers, journalists, detectives—even clergymen. If the brightest criminologists were working to unravel the mystery, so were hundreds of the brightest criminologists working to make the mystery deeper.

"Every mystery, Mr. Jameson, has a simple explanation behind it, and the simpler the explanation, the more difficult does it become to elucidate the mystery. The plain key of our mystery lay in a drug. I alone of all the world know the ingredients of this drug, and when I die the formula dies with me. In dishonest hands it would cause chaos!

"The drug is a fine white powder that we wrap in the shape of a torpedo, in a scrap of tissue paper. Drop one of these torpedoes and it explodes without noise, smoke or odor. An odorless and invisible vapor emanates from this explosion and forms a harmless but extremely powerful anesthetic. Any one coming within the zone of this anesthetic will be peculiarly affected. He walks, laughs, talks and works the same as before, but to external influences, to what goes on about him, he actually is dead. Upon 'coming to' he has no knowledge of having been under any influence whatever. In reality, as far as the outside world is concerned, that man has lost from five to ten minutes of his life. You, Mr. Jameson, were under the influence of this drug twice in Major Burke's house, once when the child was taken away and once when she was brought back!"

I gasped.

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"Is it also potent in the open air?" I asked.

"It is, and within a radius of several hundred feet."

THEN, and then only, did I see how the plot was carried out. In the houses, in the post-offices, in banks, and upon the streets, men were stationed to drop torpedoes at the proper moment, and during the ensuing five minutes organized workers could accomplish wonders! If more time was required, it was so easy to keep on dropping the drug! How simple, how almost childish the whole thing was! But some of the minor points still were a trifle obscure.

"But," I asked, "the men who did the work? Would not this drug overcome them as well?"

"Certainly," replied Dr. Merriman, "were it not for the fact that I discovered an analeptic that, taken prior to the anesthetic, would render our own people immune. Without the former drug the latter would have been useless as a working assistant."

"And the certified checks," I asked, "and the way in which they were cashed? Why all those unnecessary risks?"

"As I have said before, we were teaching a lesson. We wanted mystery. The more the mystery the more effective our present lesson, and the less necessity for teaching subsequent ones. The incendiary fires may seem like an unnecessary waste. They were not. They taught the lesson that, when the kidnaping came, we were inexorable!"

"Suppose," I asked, "that some of these men had not paid their ransom money? What would you have done with the children? Would you have permanently kept them away from their parents?"

"That, too, was all planned out," said Dr. Merriman. "Had those men failed to give their checks we simply would have robbed them—burglarized their safes and safety-deposit boxes. And, after having taken what we had first demanded, we would have returned the children. We had prepared to do this in many cases. So thoroughly were our victims frightened, however, that we did not have to go to any extreme lengths. Anyway, in a majority of cases the children were not taken more than a few blocks from their homes."

For a long time we both sat silent, thinking. Suddenly Dr. Merriman spoke: "Well," he began, "and what is your decision? Do you feel that your duty lies in exposing us, or in keeping silent and allowing us to work out our plans which seem to us to be for the greater good of all?"

"Suppose I should say that I intended to expose the order? Would I ever be given that opportunity?"

The president shrugged his shoulders.

"One does not threaten his friends," he said.

"Which means much or nothing," I retorted. "At any rate, this is my proposal: You will furnish me with documentary evidence that this money was diverted to the uses you say it was. You will give me your word of honor that the order will resort to no more methods like those of kidnaping, which causes innocent persons such anguish. You will promise me that the formula of your peculiar drug dies when you die, so that it may never get into unscrupulous hands. Do this, and I shall maintain silence. Refuse, and no matter what the consequences, my duty, as I see it, is to immediately expose the entire plot!"

The president swung about in his office chair and opened a little safe. He extracted a massive ledger and threw it down on the table desk before me.

"This," he said, "is the secret record of what has been done with the money. You have my word of honor on the other points. I shall probably live at least fifteen years longer. At my death you can publish all you know of the mystery. Your ban of silence will be lifted then. Is that sufficient?"

For a full minute our hands met in tight clasp, and then:

"You have accomplished the impossible," I said, "for in this hour you have revolutionized my life-long attitude toward the established order of things. And for that I thank you."

That was eighteen years ago. Dr. Merriman died yesterday. To-day I tell the story and let the world judge of it.

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The Man Who Saw

by Talbot Mundy.

HE WAS a fine-looking man, was Michael Blackmore. There were six feet and two inches of him, broad in the back, deep-chested, and straight; he had a fine big black mustache, and a strong, dark, good-looking face that made passers-by look twice at him; and his brown eyes were as level and unflinching and inscrutable as Fate itself. Moreover he had a way with women.

He was sergeant-major of his regiment; and that was a fine thing to be even in those days, when the pay was less and the privileges were fewer than at present; and he was a prince among sergeant-majors in an army that has always had the finest sergeant-majors in the world.

The men realized his efficiency to their abiding disgust, and obeyed him with grudging admiration; and the officers drew comfort from it. The regiment was what it was because of him. And yet no one, either officer or enlisted man, looked on him as a friend, and no one either knew or cared what his private opinions were; he was known, and admired, from end to end of India as Black Mike of Jungalore; but no man loved him.

Black Mike retaliated in kind. He went his own way, kept his own counsel, and did his duty in a most efficient manner of his own; and when his day's work was done, and well done, he prosecuted his various and quite amazing love-affairs without apparently knowing or caring who witnessed them.

He had a bad name in the bazaar, for the natives of India are not in the least partial to the attentions of white soldiers to their womenfolk; but he could talk the language that is spoken round Jungalore perfectly, and he had a vein of cunning in his composition that could pilot him through even the drawn curtains of the East. The natives hated him, and feared him; and Black Mike made love and went his way.

The regiment was the J. L. I.'s, and it had been a famous regiment. It paraded well, and drilled well, even in '57, thanks to Black Mike. But it had been stationed too long in Jungalore, which lies away and away to the northward of Cawnpore in the middle of a densely populated "babu" country.

The natives of that district never have been fighting men; they have been traders, and farmers, and manufacturers, and money-lenders for centuries—cunning, underhanded schemers, possessed of an amazing disregard for death, and an equally amazing dislike for getting hurt. They hated the English, and especially the English soldiers;

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but they have hated in turn, and just as cordially, every one of the conquering peoples that have overridden them and taxed them and bullied them through wave after wave of succeeding conquest since the birth of India.

They had overdeveloped brains with which to scheme against their conquerors, but they lacked always the courage and cohesion to overthrow them. It needed the Sepoy Rebellion to make them fight instead of talking fight.

SO THE J. L. I.'s grew fat and weary in cantonments. They guarded the big stone jail in Jungalore, and that is no proper task for fighting men. They heartily despised the only enemy they might possibly be called upon to fight, and the reason for regimental discipline ceased to be so obvious; gradually their officers grew slack in the enforcement of it, and what should have been the very life-blood of the regiment became a thing to cavil at and avoid by subterfuge.

After the fashion of those days they were harshly treated, and harassed by various annoying regulations, and they had plenty of time in which to resent their lot through the long, hot, lazy afternoons. By degrees they came to regard their officers as unreasonable martinets; that was the beginning of the trouble. Then they began to realize that officers are only human, and that each one had his private and peculiar weakness; they began to despise them; and from that point, stage by stage, they descended to the verge of mutiny.

Their full name and entitlement was the Honorable East India Company's Eighty-Second (Jungalore) Regiment of Light Infantry; but that name was much too long for general use. Like every other official thing in India they were known by their initials, or part of them, and as the J. L. I.'s the regiment had left its mark, cut deep, on most of the battle-fields of India.

It would have been all right now, if the men had had a chance to fight and feel their feet; but, stationed in that fat, green country, they had nothing much else to do but fight each other, and drink themselves into cells, half-sections at a time. And their officers were in no greatly better predicament.

There was no sport of any kind at Jungalore, and the British officer needs sport, and plenty of it, to keep him in condition. These particular officers were good enough men; they were quite devoid of cowardice, and they were bred and brought up in the same way as other officers whose names are famous; but it is not in human nature to continue for year after year guarding a big stone jail instead of your country's honor, and retain your enthusiasm for a service that is supposed to be based on glory.

There was no glory at Jungalore, and uncommonly little fun; but the Mess Madeira was magnificent. So, slowly, and by gradual degrees, the regiment became a mere trained mob, instead of the single-minded, many-handed unit it should have been.

Black Mike was the only man who suffered no deterioration. He saw the change that was taking place, for a good sergeant-major is in touch with officers and men, swinging like a pendulum between them; he should be the first person to know what is wrong with a regiment's morale, and to divine the reason for it.

Black Mike saw clearly enough, but he went through the routine of his business and said nothing; the regiment still paraded clean and glittering as it ought to do, and the usual number of drills were gone through the usual number of times a day; the men feared him and obeyed him; there was no murmuring while on duty, and there was even less than the usual amount of crime. But a rot had set in in the regiment, and Black Mike knew it.

He went his way daily down to the bazaar on errands of his own, and as time went on there were signs there that he could not fail to recognize. There were always men of the regiment down there, slouching about in twos and threes in and out of native grog-shops, spending money freely, but very seldom getting really drunk. He came across them every now and then talking in low tones to natives—a thing that the British soldier is seldom prone to, and there was one native, Chundha Ram by name, who seemed to be forever fraternizing with the soldiers.

Black Mike knew Chundha Ram; he was a high caste native, whose religion forbade him as a general rule to associate with foreigners, and Black Mike knew the caste rules as well as any one. But he kept on his course, and still said nothing; his business lay always farther down in the bazaar, where a Hindu girl thrummed on a stringed instrument and waited for him.

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THIS interludes with her were not in the least like what the J. L. I.'s would have suspected, had they wasted any time on speculation. Once his love-affairs did come up for discussion in the canteen, and a recently joined youngster openly expressed his envy.

"Him?" said Bill Connors, who was reckoned shrewd by the men and a "lawyer" by his officers. "Him? Why, he's the livin', breathin' image o' Hanuman, the God o' Love, that's what he is, with a different woman for every day o' the week, an' Hell waitin' for him! Envy him, do you? I don't envy him! Mark what he'll get by and by, an' then see if you envy him!"

That was the first openly expressed hint that the sergeant-major was included among the victims of their intended vengeance, and the low laugh that followed told more than words could have done that he was less popular even than the officers.

Black Mike must have heard the whisperings; every now and then he came on little groups of men, behind walls and around unexpected corners, talking together earnestly in low tones and arguing; he must have noticed, too, the scowls that followed him everywhere, and he could hardly have helped hearing the mocking laughter that was directed at him whenever his back was turned. But he still said nothing; and he went on his daily walk to the bazaar with his back as straight and his walk as care-free and swaggering and independent as it had always been.

Whatever Connors might have to say about it, the whole regiment would have envied Black Mike if that Hindu girl of his had been less invisible; but though she had succumbed to his allurements, she was still a purdah-woman, hidden behind the inviolable curtains of the East. No white man save Black Mike saw her. She lay and longed for him, and thrummed on her guitar, and sang a native song, the ending of whose every verse was "They will make thee King, my master!" And when he entered, she flung the instrument aside and rose to greet him with a "Hail, Heaven-born!" He changed then, or seemed to change. The mask of iron indifference left him, and the man stepped out from beneath the mold of the sergeant-major.

Love-making in Hindustanee is a little different from the ordinary methods of the soldier-man; it is just as near to nature, but it is more like the flowers of nature, and less like the untilled weeds. Black Mike was past master of it, and he lay on the mat beside her and wooed his Indian sweetheart with honeyed words until her dark eyes glistened, and her teeth, like two rows of chosen pearls, peeped at him through the sweetest smiling lips in Asia. Then she would shake her head at him, and sing the last words of her song again, "They will make thee King, my master!"

"Little fool! Am I not thy King already?"

"Indeed art thou! But others need thee! There is no peace in Ind—nothing but intrigue and corruption and the matching of scheme with scheme. Men need a strong man to rule them, and thou art chosen. Aie! my beloved, thou art chosen!"

"By Chundha Ram?" Black Mike rolled over, face downward, and bit his sleeve.

"Nay. But by those who sent him. Thou shalt rule the whole of Ind, Heaven-born!"

When he left her and faced the blazing sunlight beyond the curtains, the human element shrank once more inside him, and the sergeant-major strutted out again to stare at the world with level eyes; and as his straight, white-clad figure swaggered down the dusty road—almost before he was out of sight even—the fat, good-natured-looking *babu*, Chundha Ram, would enter the room that he had left. The girl did not rise to receive him, nor call him Heaven-born; but she expected him, and did not seem to resent his coming.

"Does he take it well?" asked the *babu.*

She nodded.

"Even to-day, but a short hour ago, he chuckled with delight at the thought of so great an honor. He turned away from me and bit his sleeve that I might not hear him. Listen, Chundha Ram! Thou wilt spare his life?"

"I have promised!" said the *babu.*

"Thy promises! What worth have they to me? How shall I know thou wilt not cause him to be slain with all the others?"

"I have promised!" said the *babu* once again. "But his life only! It is thy reward. The others die, all of them, before nightfall on the appointed day!"

"Thou wilt slay him too!"

"Nay! I have promised!"

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II

ONE afternoon Black Mike came on Private Connors loafing in the bazaar, and this time he stopped and spoke to him.

"Come over here!" he ordered.

Connors obeyed him sulkily.

"What's this talk about a mutiny, and what's Chundha Ram got to do with it?"

Connors's little slits of eyes opened wide, and he drew back like a scared snake.

"What d'you mean?" he asked.

"Out with it!" said the sergeant-major. "I know you're at the head of it, and I know Chundha Ram's version. I want yours!"

There was no avoiding Black Mike's level eyes that seemed able to read right down into the soul of a man; and Bill Connors, like many other talkers and ringleaders, lacked courage when single-handed.

"It's more than my life's worth to tell you, sergeant-major!" he answered after a moment.

"Take your chance of that! If you don't tell me, you'll hang in hollow square in less than a week! I'll see to that! If there's to be a mutiny, I'm in it! If I'm not in it, there'll be no mutiny or I'm not sergeant-major!"

"We thought you'd side with the officers."

"You thought wrong! Now out with it! Get it off your chest!"

So Connors told him. The scheme was to turn *fantee*—to go over to the natives. The officers were to be coaxed into the jail under some pretext or other, and shut in there for the natives to deal with as they saw fit; then the whole regiment would lay down its arms and walk outside the fort.

Chundha Ram had promised them a life of luxury and idleness, and almost limitless sums of money, and had assured them that the same thing was about to happen to nearly every other British regiment in India. They had received liberal supplies of money in advance already, and had made up their minds to mutiny and get the rest; they were only waiting now for Chundha Ram to give the word.

"And where do I come in?" asked Black Mike.

Connors eyed him inquiringly, but the sergeant-major's face betrayed nothing.

"We reckoned you'd side with the officers," he repeated looking at me sheepishly.

"Going to shut me inside the jail with them?"

"No. That wasn't the idea."

"What then? Shoot?"

Connors nodded, and Black Mike smiled grimly.

"Nice lot of mutineers you'd be without me to lead you! D'you think Chundha Ram would keep his word with you, once you'd laid down your arms? He'd butcher the whole lot of you in cold blood within half an hour! Are the non-coms all with you?"

"Sure, all of 'em!"

"Well, I'm a non-com! I'm going to lead this business. I'll conduct the negotiations with Chundha Ram, and I'll fix it so that we keep our weapons. You tell the men from me that if they don't agree to that the mutiny's off! If I don't lead it, I'll put a stop to it!"

"All right, sergeant-major, I'll tell 'em."

"And see here! You tell 'em to carry on as though I knew nothing about it. I'll talk to a few of them now and then, but no demonstrations, mind! Nothing that would excite suspicion! Remember, I'm sergeant-major until the thing comes off, and I'll be treated so!"

"All right, sergeant-major."

Then Black Mike, committed to lead a mutiny, swaggered down to the bazaar again to have a talk with Chundha Ram; he talked for two hours, and then returned to barracks.

The men watched Black Mike after that as birds watch a prowling cat. They were afraid of him, and not quite sure of him, and they did not dare kill him for fear that the fat would be in the fire too soon. They gave him no opportunity whatever to talk to the officers in private, although Black Mike showed not the slightest desire to do it; there was always somebody within earshot of him, and even in the bazaar he was kept in sight until he disappeared behind the purdah of the house where his girl waited for him. None of the men ever knew what he talked to her about, and nobody else cared.

BLACK MIKE was one of the few men, though, who knew in advance of the impending Sepoy Rebellion, and he must have drawn his information from some such source. He had warned

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his Colonel of it more than a year ago, but almost the most amazing thing about that rebellion was the way that the British officers ignored the warnings of it. They absolutely refused to believe that there was a chance of an Indian rising, and when Black Mike spoke of it his Colonel laughed at him.

There was no language star against the sergeant-major's name on the muster-roll, and the Colonel had taken the senior grade examination in Hindustanee; it passed his comprehension that a non-commissioned man should know more of the language and the country than he himself did.

And yet Blackmore could make love in the native dialect to three different girls at once, and keep them all guessing. There was more knowledge of India and the Indians in his little finger than in the heads of all his officers put together, and Black Mike knew it. His position, though, forbade any display of resentment or superior knowledge, just as his character precluded the possibility of risking a second snub—one such was enough for him. Besides, had he told his Colonel that a mutiny of the regiment was impending, as well as an uprising of the whole of India, he would probably have been locked up in the guard-room as a lunatic, and the least thing that would have happened to him would have been reduction to the ranks.

He preferred to take his own line and quell the regimental mutiny himself; the Colonel, he knew, would only set a match to the stored-up powder if alarmed, and the regiment would be doomed and damned forever. He had the honor of the regiment at heart, and it seemed to him that he saw his way clear to preserve it.

Every now and then a delegation of the men, headed by Private William Connors, would waylay him for an interview; their conversation began invariably with threats of what they would do to him at the slightest sign of what they were pleased to call treachery on his part, and it ended with excited queries as to when and exactly how the blow they planned was to be struck.

"Ever see a file o' men lined up with their backs to the twelve-pounders?" he asked them. "Feel like trying it? You move before Chundha Ram gives the word, and the guns 'll be over from Jullundra in half a jiffy. There's four batteries there, and it's only fourteen miles away."

The guns! They had not thought about the guns! With the short-sighted cunning of uneducated men they had laid a scheme cleverly enough to trap their officers; but they had looked no farther than their noses, and the mention of the guns brought terror to them.

The Bengal Horse Artillery was the finest branch of the East India Company's service; the men were magnificent, and loyal to the last drop of blood that ran in them. There were four-and-twenty sleek twelve-pounder guns at Jullundra, fourteen miles away, and they were horsed and manned by the very best that England could produce.

"What about the guns, sergeant-major? Chundha Ram said all the other regiments were going to do the same—like us—mutiny. How about 'em?"

"You leave the guns to me! Leave everything to me! Your plan's all right enough about the officers. Stick to that, and leave me to settle the rest. What you've got to bear in mind is that these natives are as treacherous as they make 'em; I've fixed it now so's we keep our arms and some ammunition, and we'll be able to look after ourselves after it's all over; but unless we stick together they'll turn on us like a shot as soon as they're in possession of the jail.

"We can loot all we want to so long as we're still a regiment and don't seem afraid of them, but if we start looting afterward, one by one, there'll be mighty few of us left to loot within twenty-four hours—you take my word for it!"

"What about Chundha Ram?" they asked him. "Is he square?"

"Square as the average run of natives! Don't let him think that you're afraid of him—that's all. If he thinks that you're afraid he'll break his word and butcher the lot of you, or try to. Keep the upper hand with him! Better still, leave him to me; I know how to deal with him."

THEY began to have more confidence in Black Mike after that; he seemed to be sincerely one of them; and along with their growing confidence in him they began to be surer of themselves; they had a strong man to lead them, and the regiment began to cohere again. It was mutinous, but it began again to be a unit, capable of acting uniformly, precisely, and on the instant. There was less grumbling, and the men looked less sulky; they began even to behave better, and one morning after six

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o'clock parade the Colonel addressed them and actually complimented them on their good behavior.

If he could have heard the ribald laughter in the barrack-rooms afterward he might have been enlightened, but it was not considered good policy in those days to know the men too intimately; instead of getting into better touch with them, he wrote a long report to the authorities in which he boasted, among other things, of his men's good conduct.

It was not only the J. L. I.'s who were anxious about those guns at Jullundra; the natives were worried about them too, and Chundha Ram spoke to Black Mike about them.

"About the artillery, *sahib?* Would your men fight if the gunners got news of their mutiny and tried to interfere?"

"That all depends," said Blackmore. "If they got here before it happened, the men would be partly afraid and partly ashamed, and they'd call the thing off. If they came too late, the men would either fight or else scatter; they'd probably scatter —one regiment couldn't make much of a show against four batteries."

The *babu* nodded. He would like the regiment to scatter. It would be easier to deal with afterward.

"The guns must not arrive—too soon!" he said deliberately.

"You can't prevent them coming unless you contrive to keep the news from them."

"They will get news, *sahib*—when all is over. That will be arranged. Then they will come galloping—there will be an ambuscade—and——" The *babu* shrugged his fat shoulders.

"Who'll arrange the ambuscade?"

"I will, *sahib.*"

"Better let me hunt out the right place for you. I know more about that kind of thing than you do."

"Pardon me, *sahib.* Were you to wander out alone in the direction of Jullundra, knowing what you know, you would not return alive! That, too, would be attended to!"

Black Mike grinned pleasantly.

"Come with me," he answered.

Chundha Ram eyed him in silence for half a minute; then he nodded. It suited his sense of humor perfectly that a British soldier's knowledge of warfare should be used for the undoing of his own countrymen.

"If you have time, *sahib*, we will go now," he answered.

THE two men got into a native bullock-cart and drove out leisurely in the direction of Jullundra, while Chundha Ram chewed betel-nut reflectively, and Black Mike searched the surrounding country with eyes that took in every crease and fold in it, and burned them in his memory. Two-thirds of the distance to Jullundra he pointed out to Chundha Ram a place that was admirably suited as a trap for galloping artillery; they could be almost surrounded and shot down at close range from under cover.

"How many men can you spare for the ambuscade?" asked Blackmore.

"More thousands than you or I can count, *sahib!* All India is behind this uprising!"

"You don't want too many. The chief element of an ambuscade is surprise. Your men must not be seen. If the ground scouts catch sight of them they'll lead the batteries round by another route, and your trouble'll all go for nothing; besides that, you'll have the guns to deal with at the other end. Send just as many as can be concealed in the cover here—say, a thousand, certainly not more—and clear everybody else away from the countryside.

"Concentrate your forces on the jail. If the gunners see any bodies of armed men anywhere about, they'll be on their guard, and you'll never trap them. Clear the whole countryside, set your ambuscade right here, and make all the others close in on Jungalore—understand? Then, if any of the guns do get through, you'll have plenty of men near the jail to deal with them."

"I understand, *sahib;* it shall be done as you say. And we will not be ungrateful to you; you will be better situated than a King when the English are no longer overlords of India."

And Black Mike rolled over on his side in the bullock-cart and once more bit his sleeve as he had done when the girl had prophesied.

"Now look here, Chundha Ram," he said, as the bullock-cart bumped and squeaked along the road to Jungalore again; "you've got to do this thing properly and make no mistakes about it; otherwise

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there'll be a holy mess. Are you going to take my advice or aren't you?"

"You see that I take it, *sahib!* Otherwise why should I ride with you in a bullock-cart?"

"True for you. Now listen. The men of the J. L. I.'s won't surrender without a parley. They've got to save their faces, you understand. You, being a black man, don't know about it, but there's such a thing as the honor of a regiment; take my word for it—it's so."

"Is it different to other sorts of honor?" asked the *babu* blandly.

"In some ways, no; in others, yes. Now for instance, supposing you were to be surrounded by a gang of thugs while you were in this bullock-cart, and they ordered you to surrender; you'd surrender, wouldn't you?"

"Surely, *sahib.* I would be but one against many and I would be afraid."

"That's the idea exactly. It's the same with a regiment; they're not going to surrender without some apparent reason why they should. I mean they won't just walk out and ask to be taken prisoners. You'll have to show up with a sufficient force, and then you'll have to talk to them and call on them to surrender. They can save their faces that way; it wouldn't be dishonoring the regiment—at least not to the same extent—to surrender to a vastly superior force. Understand?"

"I understand, *sahib;* and words are cheap! What shall I tell them?"

"Be more polite about it than the thugs I spoke of would be to you, but use the same sort of argument. Make it clear that they are surrendering because there is no alternative."

"I understand, *sahib.*"

"And talk in Hindustanee, Chundha Ram. Sometimes when you're talking English you make mistakes, and there won't be room for anything of that sort. I'll be standing at the head of the regiment, and I'll translate what you have to say. I know just how to handle 'em, and you don't; you haven't lived among them for years and years as I have, Chundha Ram."

"I thank God I have not, *sahib!*" said the *babu* smiling; "but everything shall be done as you say, and the white regiment shall save its honor. It is a small matter, and words are cheap."

The sergeant-major ground his teeth. The honor of the J. L. I.'s was not at all a small matter to him; he meant to save it, even if it cost his own life, and that of every single officer and man in the regiment, to do it.

"Is everything arranged finally for Sunday?" he asked.

"Sunday morning," said the *babu,* nodding, "at the usual time for Church Parade."

III

THE regiment behaved itself and waited in grimly concealed impatience until Sunday came. Not a man was in cells on any charge, but the big stone jail was full of civil prisoners, and the Colonel made his usual round of inspection just before church-time, followed by all his officers. The rear of the procession was brought up by a sergeant, and the sergeant-major stayed with the regiment, mustering them company by company for parade.

The sergeant chanced to be one of the men's keenest ringleaders, and he had learned his part perfectly; as the junior subaltern followed the rest through the huge arched gateway into the gloom beyond, the sergeant stepped back quickly and slammed the immense teak doors behind him. As the clang of its shutting and the rattle of the big iron bolt told that the officers were prisoners within the jail, a bugle-call rang out across the barrack square, and the regiment fell in in a hurry, breaking all precedent on Church Parade by bringing their rifles and ammunition-pouches with them.

Eyes glanced uneasily from left to right up and down the lines, looking for signs of flinching, but no one spoke. Men say little under the stress of that sort of excitement. They felt uneasy, for the lines seemed lonely and unusual without their officers.

"'T'shun!" barked the sergeant-major, and they came to attention, eyes straight in front of them, from force of habit. He gave them no time to think, for he read their condition exactly, and he saw fit to lead them to the climax as they were.

"Form fours!" he ordered.

Then he marched them round to the *maidan,* to the spot just outside the city wall where it had been agreed the surrender should take place. They were lined up outside the city almost before the imprisoned officers had had time to wonder what was

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happening and why no one came to let them out.

The sergeant-major stood and faced them —the one lone man among nine hundred who was unafraid. The men were afraid of what they were doing, for it is not exactly every Sunday that a British regiment mutinies.

"Listen!" he ordered. "The success of this depends on your not letting these natives think that you're afraid of them. Remember that!"

A murmur answered him—a low growl, half wonder, half disgust. They were not afraid of natives!

"Leave the talking to me! I'll listen to what the Indian says, and then translate."

Then he turned his broad, well-hollowed back to them and waited for the *babu*, standing right out alone in front of the regiment like a white statue of drilled inscrutability; and behind him the regiment rustled and shifted feet with a noise such as trees make when a light breeze blows through them. Blackmore heard it and understood; the game was half won already—but only half won.

THE ranks stiffened, and the sergeant-major stared steadily in front of him as Chundha Ram advanced across the *maidan*. He was followed by a big, silent mob of men—silent in expectation of the coming loot and slaughter; they were clothed in every color of the rainbow, and armed with every imaginable weapon, from matchlocks to service rifles, and from axes to spears made out of household implements.

It was a big, unwieldy mob, formidable only for its numbers. Chundha Ram halted it within two hundred paces of the regiment; then he stepped up to address the sergeant-major.

"Are you ready to surrender?" he asked, with just the least suspicion of insolence in his voice, but speaking in Hindustanee as agreed.

Blackmore played his part promptly.

"And why should we surrender?" he asked. "And to whom?"

"You will see," said the *babu* oilily, and waving his hand in a magnificent gesture toward the mob behind him,—"you will see that we have you at a great disadvantage—an overwhelming disadvantage. You are few, and we are many. Surely you would be afraid to fight! Your officers, too, seem frightened; they are hiding in the jail!"

Black Mike turned to the men behind him.

"This man says," he roared, pitching his rasping voice till it echoed against the city wall, and every single man heard every word he said, "that you've got to surrender to him or else he'll hand you over to his mob. He says that your officers are hiding in the jail, and that you're too big cowards to fight that mob without them. He thinks that you're afraid of him!"

The growl that followed that announcement disturbed Chundha Ram considerably; Black Mike eyed him with something not unlike amusement, and the *babu* flushed darkly underneath his olive skin.

"Well?" asked Chundha Ram.

"They don't seem quite to understand you. Try some more talk."

The babu tried it. He spoke now in English, ignoring the sergeant-major, and addressing the men directly; and with each sentence that he uttered he damned his cause more completely. Soon the men were too amazed even to listen. "As promised, we will show you mercy!" said the *babu*, trying vainly to compromise between politeness to the soldiers and bombast for the sake of the mob behind him. The regiment rustled—too amazed to speak. He drew nearer, mistaking the shifting feet for a sign of indecision.

"You were only hirelings in the first instance! The Company has paid you little and has given you ill-treatment; now why should you befriend the Company when I offer you more money and kind treatment? Why should you be killed? Why should I order my men here to make an end of you? You should surrender to our much more powerful force, and accept our clemency." He paused to regain his breath, and to let the effect of his grandiloquent speech sink in.

"To —— with him!" shouted some one, and the murmuring ranks began to roar wholesomely.

"What's your answer?" demanded the sergeant-major's rasping voice.

"Tell him to go to ——!"

This from a hundred men; and there came the click and snap of loading rifles. Black Mike leaped suddenly aside and slipped to his proper place behind the regiment.

"At two hundred yards!" came his

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accustomed voice, the voice they had heard and obeyed so often. "Ready!—present!—fire!"

Chundha Ram never realized what hit him. He curled up and died where he had stood, and seven or eight hundred bullets sped past him to find their billets in the howling mob he had led. The regiment was saved now and the game was won, if Black Mike knew anything at all of men.

"Form fours!" he bellowed, and they hinged into the fresh formation like a clockwork mechanism.

They were in fours and ready to move in any direction before the mob of Hindus had recovered from the shock of their terrific volley, or even knew there would be no surrender.

"Right!" roared Black Mike at the top of his lungs. "By the left—double! Left wheel!"

He led them at the run back along the city wall and through the gate they had emerged from, and before even the men themselves had had time to realize that they had sloughed their rôle of mutineers, they were formed up, panting, before the jail gate, and facing the direction from which the enemy would come. Then Black Mike swung the jail door open, and let light in on the astonished officers. The Colonel emerged into the sunlight first.

"What's the meaning of this?" he demanded.

"All present and correct, sir!" answered Black Mike, licking up his right hand to the salute. "Take charge, sir, quick! They'll be here in a second!"

The Colonel looked around him and took charge. A glutton he might be, and a bad officer in peace time, but he was a man of action and prompt decision when it came to fighting. There was surely no time to waste on argument, and his commands began to ring out loud and clear almost before the words were out of the sergeant-major's mouth. And the men obeyed them on the instant; they had had enough of mutiny.

Picked men, stationed by Chundha Ram on every roof-top, began an intermittent fire on the front of the jail; these were the men who were to have shot down the soldiers one by one after their surrender, and the J. L. I.'s had a chance to see what fate had really awaited them. Nine or ten men were down already. The Colonel marched them inside the jail and stationed them as best he could to defend the place—some on the roof, some at the embrasures, and the remainder down below as a reserve to act when needed.

IV

THEN the amazing happened. It was one of those terrific things that happen once in a thousand years when the right man springs on the right horse, and rams his heels in at the right ten-thousandth of a second. The right horse was the Colonel's charger—a chestnut Kathiawari gelding that had stood tied up outside the jail gate, and the man was Black Mike, the sergeant-major.

He leaped on the horse, rammed in his heels, and rode—straight for the rebel ranks. The defenders of the jail gasped as they watched him, for there were twenty thousand armed natives swarming toward the big square through every street and alley. They were scattered yet, but they saw him, and rushed in with a yell to meet him. Swords clove the air an inch behind him, bullets screamed past him, eddying whirls of black humanity scrambled to block his way. They grabbed at his rein, and he beat them off with a stirrup, brandishing the leather in his hand. They shot his helmet off and riddled the flapping cloth of his open tunic with bullet-holes, and men threw themselves prone, trying to hamstring the horse under him; but Black Mike rode straight as a die, at, through or over everything!

The maddened charger reared and plunged and leaped, and Black Mike flogged it with the leather strap; the natives howled and blocked the road in front of him, but as a shuttle shoots through a loom, he burst through a gathering mob of twenty thousand men—a flogging, flashing, unexpected bolt of grim determination, and got clean through, untouched, to the plain beyond, headed for Jullundra!

"The man's mad!" said the Colonel; "stark, staring, raving mad!"

"He's gone for the guns," said some one, and the Colonel nodded.

"Now, men," he shouted, "the guns should be here within two hours; we've got to hold this place till they get here!"

The guns! The men roared now at the thought of them! A week ago they were

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worried about the guns, but things had somehow altered.

You must go to India where the thing happened, and hear it from the lips of Indians whose fathers saw Black Mike ride, to get a real idea of how he saved the jail and the lives of the men who held it. They will tell you that he rode straight through the ambuscade that Chundha Ram had set two-thirds of the way to Jullundra; he knew where it should be, for he had placed it, and he rode through it to be sure that it was there, and that his trip with Chundha Ram had not been a trick to throw him off his guard.

A hell of bullets greeted him, and a hundred men sprang out to seize his horse, but he rode straight through them—silent and untouched. They say there that a legion of devils rode with him, and that the Kathiawari gelding that he rode breathed fire from his nostrils and sent green fire flashing from his heels. That, of course, is nonsense, and the truth is that Black Mike was a man, and the Gods of War favor such as he.

HE BURST like a bomb into Jullundra, and shouted the alarm; and he very nearly got locked up in the guard-room as a lunatic, for nobody believed him. But he convinced them somehow that at least there was need for action —the bullet-holes through his riddled tunic were proof enough of that.

So the four batteries thundered out on to the *maidan*, with their ground scouts spread out like a fan in front of them, and the gun-teams plunging in answer to the lash. When they did decide to move they were up and away with the speed of frightened antelopes —a thundering, clattering avalanche of muscle and brain and iron! And in front of the ground scouts, on a fresh horse, rode Black Mike, the sergeant-major of the J. L. I.'s; he showed them where the ambuscade was hidden, and led them round it.

Grape-shot was too much for the mutineers. They melted before the guns like snow under a hot sun, and the jail was saved!

Next day came news of the general outbreak that had burst out like a flame through disaffected India, and the guns and the J. L. I.'s set out to reach Delhi by forced marches, for every man was needed to strike a blow at the heart of the rebellion. As they filed behind the guns through the bazaar, two paces behind the regiment, in among the dust and flies and heat-haze, marched a straight-backed man who, loaded up with sixty pounds of haversack, preached the art of marching in raucous undertones:

"Keep your places in the fours there! Less talking, and keep some o' the dust out o' your throats! Save your breath for marching! Now then—Left!—Left!—Left!"

As he passed a corner house in the bazaar there came the tinkling of a stringed instrument, and a girl's voice sang in Hindustanee: "They will make thee King, my master!" He laughed aloud this time; there was no need to bite his sleeve. He needed no job as King; he was Black Mike, the sergeant-major of the J. L. I.'s, who had saved the honor of the regiment, and then the regiment itself, to fight for England! Three weeks hence he would salute his Colonel and report "All present and correct" in front of Delhi, having nursed the men all the way by forty-mile-a-day stages. Why make him King? The British army has built its reputation on the bones and brains of such as he!

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All in the Day's Work

A Tale of the Prairies in '74

by William P. De Wolf.

MANY tragedies in which the red man and the white played the leading rôles upon the wide stage of the prairie, with the eternal hills as a setting, quicken the story of the conquest of the West; but none exceed in thrilling incident, in bravery, in forgetfulness of self and in pathos, one enacted in the Texas Panhandle on a beautiful September day in 1874, when all nature save man alone was at peace.

For a setting there was the broad sweep of plain, stretching silent and pensive to the far horizon; for a background, the sand dunes of the Wachita River, lifting their monochrome crests in marshaled ranks above the level of the stream; the actors, a band of blood-crazed Indians and a party of military despatch-bearers, the latter, a mere corporal's guard, making a last stand against overwhelming odds and battling doggedly on in the face of defeat and death.

Years afterward in the Dakota Badlands, as the west wind crooned over the barrens and our camp-fire gleamed—a slash of red in the velvet pall of night—one of the participants in that stirring drama related to me the story as here set forth.

Amos Chapman, Billy Dixon, "Bat" Masterson and "Prairie Dog Dave," four of the younger generation of plainsmen who scouted for the Government, fought redskins or rode herd, with equal facility, were scouting with the troops under General Nelson A. Miles in September, 1874. The command was encamped in a strategic position on the banks of the Red River in the Texas Panhandle, and somewhere in the vicinity was hidden a large band of hostile Cheyennes.

The Indians had gone on the war-path early in the Spring and, sweeping over the Panhandle like a pestilence, reveled in a saturnalia of murder and pillage. Men, women and children were massacred with all the attendant atrocities of Indian brutality, ranch buildings were burned, crops destroyed and stock stampeded.

That wily campaigner, General Miles, hastened to the relief of the distressed settlers, put the Cheyennes to flight after a number of sanguinary skirmishes and drove their main body to cover near the Red River, where he planned to end the campaign. Being greatly outnumbered by the foe, he was loth to attack until reënforced by the soldiers under Major Compton, then at McClelland Creek about eighty miles to the north. Masterson and Prairie Dog Dave were detailed to carry a despatch to that officer ordering him to join Miles at once.

They bore other despatches, however, destined for Camp Supply in the Indian Territory, and hoped to be sent on to that point where they intended to change their thin Summer garb of overalls and calico shirts for warmer clothing. Much to their chagrin, they were requisitioned to guide

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Compton's men to the camp of General Miles, while Chapman and Dixon, who were with Compton, were ordered by the latter to carry the messages to Camp Supply.

TO SAFEGUARD the despatch-bearers, if such were possible in a section infested by hundreds of marauding Indians, an escort was provided consisting of a sergeant of cavalry and five troopers. Thus convoyed, the scouts started north on the perilous trip, across a country of low-rolling hills and deep arroyos, any one of which might prove an ambuscade of malignant redskins.

Knowing that the Cheyennes were closely watching the beaten paths winding southward through the Panhandle, the little party broke its own trail, and was to all appearances alone in a land filled with sunshine and carpeted with flowers; yet Death, menacing and imminent, stalked the way, ready to claim its toll at a moment of relaxed vigilance. The September haze brooding over the plain intensified the danger, for it blurred the perspective and made it difficult to distinguish objects at a distance. Despite these conditions the journey was continued for several days without unusual incident.

About the time the detachment left Compton's command, Jack Callahan's supply train of twenty-five six-mule teams, bearing provisions and ammunition from Camp Supply to General Miles, was surprised by a band of three hundred Cheyennes in the sand-hills of the Wachita River and forced to go into corral. While the military escort held the Indians in check, the teamsters strung out the wagons in a diamond-shaped formation and within the wedge-like enclosure men and mules found a precarious shelter. Shallow rifle-pits were dug behind the wheels and beneath the wagons. From those places of comparative safety the soldiers and teamsters stood off the foe for five days, losing a lieutenant of cavalry and two troopers. Then, just as the water gave out, help arrived in the guise of K Troop of the Sixth Cavalry under Captain Kingsbury, the Indians decamped and the train proceeded on its way.

The Chapman-Dixon party crossed the Wachita about four miles below the point where Callahan had been waylaid, but saw no sign of his outfit. As the eight men debouched on to the prairie from a narrow draw, however, they were sighted by a large scouting party of Cheyennes, a portion of the band that had so recently besieged the supply train. The Indians executed a flank movement and cut off retreat to the higher and safer precincts of the river-bank, forcing them to seek safety in flight across the open.

"Come on, boys! It's a case of outriding 'em, or toes turned up to the greasewood!" shouted Chapman.

The fugitives bestrode the pick of Compton's cavalry mounts, rangy, wiry animals, fleet of foot and inured to the work at hand. Crouching low over the saddle-horns, the riders unslung their carbines ready for instant action, as their horses with quick, resilient strides bore them onward at top speed.

Behind raced the Indians, the thud of their ponies' hoofs, muffled by the grass carpet of the plain, beating a staccato accompaniment to the wild undulations of their war-whoops. From their shoulders streamed rearward, like tongues of lambent flame, gaudily dyed war-blankets. Fringed buckskin covered their bodies from waist to ankle, where it was met by thonged and beaded moccasins. Above the waistline their nude torsos, striped with red and yellow ocher and anointed with bear's grease, glistened in the sun like figures of animate bronze. The inherent cruelty of their faces, now tense with blood-lust and the eagerness of chase, was heightened by the war-bonnets of eagle feathers which swept backward to their ponies' flanks.

GRADUALLY the pursuers gained in the mad race. The hard-pressed white men, taking council, decided to seek refuge in the first buffalo-wallow and from that doubtful point of vantage kill as many of the yelling redskins as possible before succumbing to force of numbers. Each knew the barbarous fate awaiting him if he fell alive into the hands of the enemy.

As the distance lessened, shots were exchanged and a running battle ensued, lasting more than an hour. Early in the unequal struggle three of the troopers had their mounts shot from under them and swung up behind the saddles of their comrades. Later a fourth and then a fifth horse was shot, whereupon the entire party was forced to dismount and continue the flight

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afoot. One of the soldiers led the three uninjured animals by the bridles and, sheltered behind them, the other men held the Indians in check by well-placed carbine fire.

Had the latter mustered sufficient courage to charge, the end would have been swift and certain; but an Indian, even with the odds largely in his favor, has little relish for rushing a white man. Moreover, the capture of the quarry appeared so certain, it seemed folly unduly to risk life or wound in an overzealous attempt to seize it.

Just as the caked mud rim of a buffalo-wallow was sighted, the soldier leading the horses was killed. The animals, freed from restraint and frightened by the smell of blood, stampeded. A race for life to the wallow followed, with the enemy in hot pursuit. Near the goal another of the troopers fell, mortally wounded.

Lying there in the open with the bullets kicking up little geysers of dust around him and the howling savages rushing toward him, he shouted in an agony of pain and fear:

"Don't let 'em get me, boys! For God's sake don't let 'em scalp me! Come back and pack me in, boys, before they get me!"

In the meantime, unaware of their companion's predicament, the others had reached the wallow and dropped into it.

Chapman was the first to hear the piteous appeal of the wounded man and hastened to his assistance, a six-shooter in each hand. Discharging them at the nearest of the redskins and checking their advance, he threw the empty weapon toward the wallow, seized the soldier by the shoulders and dragged him in the same direction. By this time Dixon and the troopers again had their carbines in action and were placing shots with such telling effect that the Indians halted and then fell back a little.

Chapman hoisted the helpless man to his shoulder and, under cover of the fusillade, was making fair progress toward the shelter, despite the handicap of his inert burden, when the Indians concentrated their fire upon him. One of the bullets found a mark below his left knee, shattering the bone so badly that the leg doubled under him and he pitched forward on his face.

In spite of the agony which sapped his strength and threatened to overpower him, the heroic scout never faltered in his effort at rescue. Reaching ahead on the uninjured leg and then drawing the knee of the other up to it, he inched painfully along in a veritable hail of lead, dragging the wounded trooper by the collar. A number of bullets lodged in the latter's body and hastened his end.

Several times Chapman attempted to stand upright, hoping the shattered member would lend him support, but it always failed him and he would pitch prone upon the plain. The few minutes required to gain the wallow, roll first the trooper and then himself into it, must have seemed an eternity to the brave fellow. That he reached the place of refuge alive was little short of miraculous. A few hours later the soldier died of his wounds.

The wallow was about fifteen feet in diameter by four feet in depth and shaped somewhat like a bowl. Around its rim the men threw up a flimsy barricade of soft dirt which they dug from its sides with their knives. Thus sheltered it was necessary to expose the head only when firing at the Indians—which, all things considered, must have been a doubtful advantage.

THROUGHOUT the afternoon the unequal battle raged and the Cheyennes circled their quarry, paying heavily in braves for their temerity, but levying a more onerous toll upon the meager fighting strength of the besieged. Three more of the soldiers were killed during the waning hours of the day, and just at dusk the sergeant was twice wounded. Later the sixth member of the escort fell, shot through the abdomen. Of the party of eight that had left Compton's command but a few days before in the full strength of physical vigor, Dixon alone remained uninjured when darkness settled over the plain.

No thought of surrender weakened the determination of the survivors to die fighting, baited and all but helpless though they were. No craven impulse made nerveless the hands that grasped the smoking carbines. No note of fear dulled the eyes that glanced along the hot gun-barrels as the bullets sped whistling to their marks in savage breasts. The Spirit of the West, militant and aggressive, indomitable in defeat as in victory, pervaded that little cache in the earth around which the exultant redskins, typifying the passing spirit of barbarism, hovered like a pack of coyotes about an open grave. To hearts thus

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buoyed and sustained in hours of travail, Death is robbed of many terrors when weighed in the balance with poltroonery.

Soon after nightfall a terrific thunderstorm arose, sending the scantily clad Indians scurrying to the cliffs along the river for shelter. The forked lightning seemed to leap from earth to sky, tearing jagged rents in the clouds from which the rain poured in a deluge that inundated the plain and added to the miseries of the men in the wallow by filling it to the brim with water. It was only by the utmost exertion the wounded managed to escape death by drowning.

Their sufferings during the horrors of that awful night defy portrayal. While the long hours of darkness tolled off the interminable minutes, those yet alive stood on the bodies of the dead in water crimson with the blood oozing from their own wounds and the life-blood of their comrades.

Yielding to repeated urgings, Dixon crawled from that human shambles and under cover of the storm evaded the Indians and hastened southward for succor, reluctantly leaving his wounded companions to resume the fight against overwhelming odds without his aid. He hoped to intercept one of a number of cavalry detachments scouting in that direction and return with it in time to save their lives. He traveled nearly thirty miles before daybreak and then hid in a clump of wild plum bushes. Thus screened from hostile eyes, he carefully watched the plain and early in the forenoon spied a party of horsemen. As they drew nearer he saw they were troopers and discharged his carbine to attract their attention.

Guided by Dixon the soldiers were soon hastening to the rescue. By that instinct for location which to a scout is almost a sixth sense, he led them unerringly to the spot just as the Indians were preparing to renew the attack. Upon sighting the troops, the redskins, with that discretion which is said sometimes to be the better part of valor, sought safety in flight.

THE scene that met the eyes of the rescuers in the charnel pit at their feet was one to move men to pity and to rage. Leaning outward, partially supporting themselves by gripping the crumbling edge of the wallow and partially by resting upon the bodies of the dead, Chapman and the sergeant, their faces coated with grime and coagulated blood, peered up at them. They alone were alive. Here a clenched hand protruding from the slime, there a pale face ringed by the bloody water and stamped indelibly with the scowl of conflict, told more eloquently than words the tragic story.

Inured to scenes of carnage and death though they were, the tears streamed unheeded down the cheeks of the rescuers as, with heads bared, they stood and gazed.

The rest is quickly told. The wounds of the two survivors were dressed and they were made as comfortable as conditions would permit. The dead troopers were buried, the bugle sounded their requiem, and, turning away from the lonely graves, the detachment started for Camp Supply with the injured.

On the way the sergeant died. Chapman on the contrary rode a horse the entire distance of seventy-five miles with his shattered left leg strapped to the stirrup-leather. At the end of the journey the leg was amputated below the knee by a military surgeon. He was out of the hospital in a month and a few weeks later had rejoined General Miles on the banks of the Red River.

For many years after that memorable fight Chapman served the Government as a scout. The loss of a leg did not in the least detract from his horsemanship, the only inconvenience he experienced being the necessity of mounting and dismounting from the right side. Congress presented him with a cork leg and voted him a second lieutenant's pension when he retired from active service.

Chapman and Dixon were types of a class that disappeared from the stage of action with the vanished West of song and story. They and their kind were elemental men, primitive in their passions and their pleasures; reckless, care-free and happy-go-lucky; quick on the trigger, strong in friendship, brave in battle, and on the square with the world. For the most part they were humble heroes, stranger alike to fortune and to fame.

To brave torture, mutilation and death at the hands of a treacherous foe was all in the day's work and was done as a matter of course. And if at the close of day "Finis" for them were written—well, the day's work had been well done, and 'neath the sod of the lone prairie in their unmarked graves they would sleep as contentedly as though storied urn recorded their passing.

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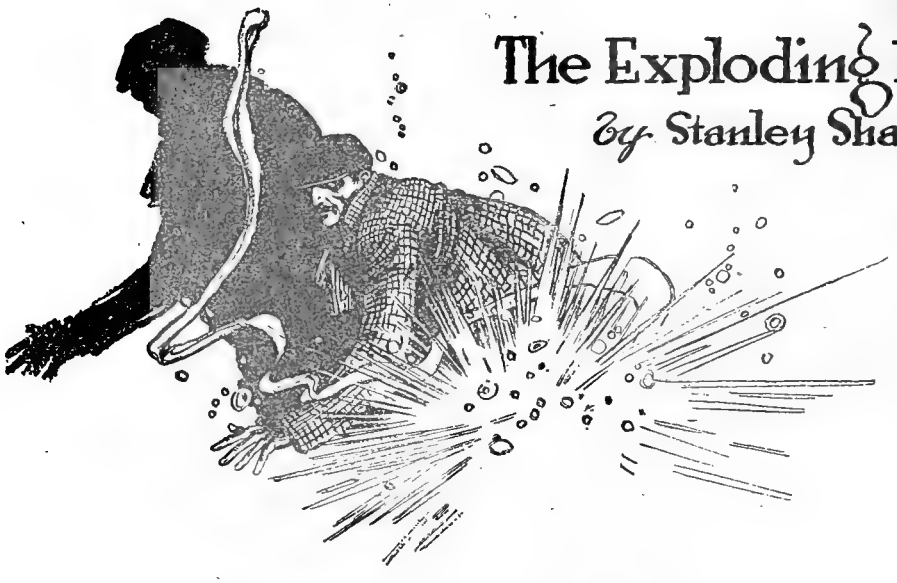

The Exploding Men

By Stanley Shaw

CHAPTER I

THE DISAPPEARING PEERS

IT MUST be a deuced queer sensation to walk about the streets with the constant possibility in mind that one may suddenly explode and disappear, bodily and eternally, much as they cause a person to vanish in the cinematograph pictures by stopping the machine; not at all conducive to comfort and ease of mind. Yet that is how nearly every important person in London felt during the season of 1913.

The situation entirely upset the staid British government, it turned Scotland Yard topsyturvy, making the best men there pinch themselves and wonder whether they were existing in a dream or reality. And what it did to that fine old moss-encrusted institution of British respectability, the House of Lords, was fearful and wonderful to behold.

It certainly did make a mess and a stir for a while. Even the Old Lady of Threadneedle Street was observed by anxious eyes to show strong symptoms of that peculiar manifestation known as "shaking in her shoes;" and, when this occurs, you may feel morally certain that the crack o' doom must surely be lurking close around the corner, waiting to spring out on you.

Consols tumbled so rapidly and so low that they nearly knocked a hole clear through the bottom, being within an ace of total annihilation; while South Africans, well, South Africans might as well have been backed by gas bubbles instead of a continent, for all they were worth during the reign of disorder referred to.

This peck o' trouble began on the morning of May 11th, a day that opened disagreeably enough, eight hours of fine, dripping rain having left the streets perfect rivers of soft, clinging, persistent mud. Instead of washing things clean and bright, as might have been hoped, the rain had come down so slowly that it merely moistened the bricks and boards of the house exteriors, the bare branches of the trees, allowing the grimy dirt and soot to stick faster and accumulate thicker than ever before.

Thus the entire city had been left one single-toned, mouse-colored mass of upheaved mounds, ruts and endless gaps of streets, having neither beginning nor ending except in vacant gray atmosphere.

This general indistinctness was further accentuated by the fog, so that few things seemed to possess solid form or substance, and objects melted, one into another, like waves of oily water. People, teams and motor-cars were constantly passing in the soft, muddy street, yet one must listen carefully to distinguish the different sounds made by each, so thick and murky was the air, so unresonant to motion.

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ON THIS gray morning, at about eleven-thirty, there turned into one of London's busy streets, a tall, well set-up gentleman, faultlessly dressed, who carried a thin swinging cane, a single eyeglass and an air of considerable distinction. His facial characteristics need not be described here, since they have been made reasonably familiar to all through their frequent portrayal in the public prints. It was Lord Lionel Careton, Conservative leader in the House.

What was Lord Careton's errand or his destination on this particular morning has never been exactly ascertained, yet it certainly must have been a matter of considerable moment, if we may judge from the description of his intense air and attitude, as described by several people who met him at this time, and more particularly by one Rob Cammer, a chemist's assistant, who was engaged in the duty of sweeping out the doorway of his employer's shop as Lord Careton paused in that vicinity for a moment preparatory to negotiating a crossing.

Precisely what occurred as Lord Lionel Careton hesitated at the crossing can, perhaps, be best told in the words of this same Rob Cammer, repeated later at the inquest and verified, in the main, by several other eye-witnesses:

Robert Cammer, tall, thin, angular, red-faced, red-headed and red-handed (as to skin); aged nineteen, assistant by profession to Hobben & Company, chemists, being duly sworn, stated as follows, in a high, piping voice:

"It was a very muddy mornink, your washup; if I 'ad er swep' art that there doorway once I 'ad er done it fifty times a'ready. An' I was er doin' of it agine, your washup, when I looks up and sees Lord Lionel Careton a standin' by the crossink—knew 'im by his pictur, sir—your washup, and I looked him over reether sharp, sir, incause I likes fine clothes myself and likes to notice what the toffs is wearin' of." Here Mr. Rob Cammer gave his neck-cloth a few self-conscious jerks, swallowed hard several times and opened both mouth and eyes very wide, preparatory to making his next astounding statement.

"His ludship was very anxious and intent abart something, sir, an' I kep' a close heye on him, when—I takes my oath on it, sir—he bust up! Yes, sir, that's esactly what 'e done, sir, he esploded, bust up completely, sir, right afore my very face an' heyes, sir, your washup, I means."

Here Mr. Rob Cammer sat down quite confident and well pleased with the sensation his words had created among the curious crowd in the musty, dusty, dark old room.

That was the exact situation; that was about all, although further questioning did bring out the added information that, coincident with the explosion, Mr. Rob Cammer had felt a rather impressive rush of either air or gas, his employer's plate-glass display windows, along with many others in the immediate neighborhood, had been broken, and several near-by passers were thrown violently to the ground by the aforesaid explosion and rush of gas.

The testimony of the police officer stationed in that neighborhood came next, and further established the main facts of the case as previously attested to. This man was Thomas Chugg, a typical London bobby, wooden, stubby, tight-chested, solemn-featured, yet with eyes beaming with sharpness and the awkward cunning of his kind.

CHUGG told his terse story in a rather jerky, injured tone of voice that showed he all-too-evidently resented the sensation created by the words of the previous witness.

"'Es, sir, I was walkin' my usual beat on Monday mornin' at ten-thirty; sarjint had just passed ten minutes previous, everythin' in proper order. I see Lord Lionel Careton comin' along from Waterloo Place, knowed him very well, sir; walkin' very rapidly, very jauntily, sir, crimson flower in the lapel of his coat, observed him closely, looked very bright and refreshin', sir, on so dull a mornin'. Touched my helmet, sir; his lordship smiled on me, very kindly, very kindly, sir.

"Lord Careton stopped just at the last crossin' on my beat, all very quiet and orderly abart, many people passin', no one near his lordship. Had my eye on him, made a very dashin' figger waitin' there, traffic rather full just then, had to wait some time, sir. I 'ad that minute stepped toward his lordship when he disappeared completely an' I 'eard a terrific explosion. Contrary to previous witness, I did *not* see his lordship 'bust up' "—this very emphatic, with a severe look at Rob Cammer standing

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by. "Don't think he did 'bust up;' think he was killed by an explosion from houtside, 'stead er hinside."

Aside from a few shreds of cloth there was discoverable absolutely no other tangible remains of Lord Lionel Careton. The pavement where his lordship had been standing at the moment showed a few very slight indentations; but not a trace of blood was discovered there, or anywhere within the vicinity; the force of the explosion had completely evaporated all the body fluids and dissipated the solids into invisible air gases.

While column after column was printed in the newspapers, it might all have been boiled down to the few fact paragraphs printed above, so far as actual information was concerned. The affair became a nine days' sensation and the chief topic of conversation in every household throughout the kingdom. There seemed but one wildly possible explanation of the shocking tragedy: Lord Careton must have been carrying with him, close to his person, some highly powerful explosive; yet no friend, relative or acquaintance had ever known Lord Careton to show the slightest interest in explosives or anything of the sort.

The throwing of a bomb by a bystander was manifestly impossible, since there was left no trace of metal. Even were the throwing of a bomb possible, some one of the many eye-witnesses would surely have perceived the act.

THE following May twenty-third was just such another drizzly, foggy day as the eleventh; a moist, humid atmosphere wrapped London like a wet blanket. At two-thirty in the afternoon extra editions of the newspapers began to be cried on the streets.

"'Ere's yer hextra! 'Orrible hexplosion of hanother lord, hexplosion in the 'ouse itself!" was the cry that set everybody searching for pennies with which to purchase a paper.

It was indeed a fact: Lord Althosrue, an influential member of the Upper House, had been standing on a raised dais in full view of more then three-score of his confrères, when they had witnessed his complete disappearance into thin air, heard a loud explosion and felt a violent disturbance in the surrounding atmosphere. Hardly a trace of the man remained in the room; the dais itself was scarcely disturbed, but several windows were broken and four or five near-by members had been thrown backward by the rush of gas.

Further than these bare facts the newspapers could furnish little save the imaginative padding and filling necessary to make a story. The body of Lord Althosrue had, apparently, burst in precisely the same manner as had that of Lord Lionel Careton.

Scotland Yard now sat up straight and took notice; it sent out its best men, nearly all of its men not absorbed in other important cases. But what was the use? What could they discover? There was nothing tangible, not even a glimmering clue to actual crime. The easily ascertainable vital facts were the simplest imaginable: Lord Careton had exploded, Lord Althosrue had promptly followed suit.

Learned chemists maintained that an abiogenetic explosion within the human body was beyond the wildest dream of possibility; yet, against this claim stood the stout and apparently insurmountable evidence that two human bodies had so exploded. And there was more to come.

Through May twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth the fog that enveloped the city continued. On each of these dates a prominent political personage, in both cases a peer, met the identical fate that had overtaken Lords Careton and Althosrue. In each of these two most recent instances, as well as in the first and second, the victims of explosion had been men whose features were more or less familiar through frequent caricatures in the public prints.

To state that London was in a perfect panic would be putting the case mildly. The police diligently herded up each known person of anarchistic tendencies; every individual carrying a covered package was an immediate object of suspicion and was forced to explain; a thorough inspection was made of every establishment where explosives were manufactured, stored or sold, each ounce being carefully traced to its final destination, all without disclosing a single clue.

Scotland Yard was very evidently up a stump; a criminal genius seemed to be at work, a detective genius seemed to be sorely needed.

The greatest medical minds gave collective study to the matter; compared, consulted and put forward the rather vague theory that food was the cause of the explo-

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sions. Some chemical compound in the daily nourishment, made, probably, with the powerful hydrochloric acid naturally secreted by the stomach, as a base, had produced an entirely new explosive of tremendous destructive power. Scotland Yard openly sniffed at this theoretical pronouncement; yet it received considerable popular approval.

Whereas the members of the House of Lords had previously feared to pass about the streets, they now became almost afraid to eat. All nutriment passing into their homes was subjected to minute analysis and examination, yet entirely without tangible results. Clearly some other clue must be found and followed if the mystery were to be solved. Never before had there been such a sensation, such baffling panic broadcast throughout the land.

CHAPTER II

TOM BRINES OF WHITECHAPEL

DOWN in among the reeking, steaming mazes of darkest, dirtiest Whitechapel lived Tom Brines; or, to be quite exact, lived a chap called Tom Brines, for the man was never christened Brines at all. The name did not even approximate his true cognomen either in sound or spelling; but this fellow, having a settled habit of flinging out the question: "'Aven't yer gort any brines?"—brains was, of course, what Tom meant to inquire about—had early become Brines to one and all.

So firmly did this appellation become attached that no person seemed to remember just what Christian name his parents had endowed him with at birth. Sometimes he was called "Tom Brines," more often just plain "Brines," and not always pleasantly spoken, either.

Brines was undersized and ratty; he had a round, bullet-shaped head with close-cropped stubby hair, and an even more stubby mustache. He was about of one drab shade all over, hair, face, hands and clothing. Nature, and his shoddy, worn apparel, had accomplished for Tom Brines what she does for the myriad wild fowl, so cleverly tinted in the prevailing colors of their habitat. Tom was clothed and created especially for foggy days, drab streets and soft lights; thus, like those same wild folk, he was particularly hard to place on such a day and in such a locality, until one bumped fairly into him.

On one of these days Tom Brines might have, and often did, pass within a foot or so of many people without one of them being able to swear positively that they had seen him. While he was no more invisible than the somber-coated cat that crouches close to the earth and escapes observation until you step upon her tail and produce a yowl of protest, Tom Brines was altogether so close to the color of a gray, drizzly day himself that he seemed, to the rapid passers-by, to be more a part of the weather than a human being.

The only remarkable feature of Tom Brines' anatomy was a pair of rather abnormally long arms that reached almost to his knees; but, since he habitually kept his hands crowded deep in his pockets, this feature of his appearance was seldom conspicuous.

The family of Tom Brines, also having existence within the mazes of Whitechapel, if such a wretched life could be called existence, were a consumptive wife and three ill-natured, ill-nurtured and ill-kempt children, all three under ten years of age. They occupied a single room in the house of one Willigan, dealer in used tins.

Their single room was a second-floor back. It looked out over a vast yard, surrounded by a six-foot board fence, and filled, nearly to overflowing, with thousands of empty tins that had formerly contained preserved meats, fruits and biscuits. The entire Brines larder was often as empty as was each unit in the vast gathering of tins to be viewed from the windows.

WILLIGAN was a short, fat, snuffy old man, with weak weeping eyes that necessitated the wearing of blue glasses. He had an immense bristling mustache and chronic asthma. Each morning he started out through the city pushing a large wheelbarrow, on the four corners of which were upright posts connected at the top with stout cords. From the cords dangled a miscellaneous collection of rattling pots and pans; these pots and pans he bartered for empty meat and fruit tins.

As the transaction involved the passing of no actual money it had considerable fascination for the cooks and charwomen who lived on the streets where "O' Tins," as they called him, regularly passed. Those were

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O' Tins' days; his nights were given over to fitful periods of sleep, sitting up in a chair, longer periods of spluttering cough and the burning of a vilely odorous powder that was supposed to relieve his attacks of asthma.

The tins old Williган collected were eventually sold to the makers of tin toys for children, and to mills where button-tops were stamped from the smaller pieces after the solder had been melted and the tins flattened out.

O' Tins leased the entire rookery whereof the Brines family occupied a single room. At this stage of his existence, Brines knew little more of O' Tins than that he was the individual who exacted his monthly bit of rent money and owned the fecund piles of tins at the rear. Later they were to know each other better. Brines worked for a manufacturing chemist out Woolwich way, earning barely enough to keep starvation from the one room and its five occupants.

One day Brines inadvertently put one foot into a vat of acid, was promptly lugged off to the hospital where the surgeons, giving no more thought to it than as if Brines were a centipede with a half-dozen feet to spare, just as promptly cut off his foot and buried it, instead of burying Brines and saving the foot as they really ought.

AFTER two weeks' opulent feeding in the hospital, Tom Brines was packed off to his quarters in Whitechapel. With the assistance of the hospital driver and a loaned pair of hospital crutches, Tom managed to reach a cot beside the window in his single room where he could, at least, inhale plenty of refreshing air and get a fine view of the empty tins at the rear, even though he never ate again. After thus assisting the patient to his home, the hospital driver said "S'long, matey," and vanished, being quite careful to take the hospital crutches back with him.

Now Tom Brines learned how close to actual starvation were his children. His eldest daughter, Polly, aged nine, entered the room just as the hospital attendant took his departure. Polly was a tiny rag of a child, with a pale skin drawn so tightly over her cheek-bones that the bones seemed about to burst through. The frowzy mop of dark hair and the great feverish, restless eyes, almost entirely brown pupil, with scarcely a hint of white, gave Polly the appearance of a spaniel; an effect that was further heightened by a continual nervous staring into corners, under the furniture and behind doors, as if she expected to discover a bone hid thereabout.

"Where's yer muvver, Polly?" asked Tom.

"Daid," laconically answered the daughter, without a sign of emotion.

"Daid!" cried Tom in consternation. "Darn't go a stringin' yer farver; trot out an' tell 'er to come on in. I ar'n't a garn to do nuffin to 'er."

"Muvver's daid," stoutly maintained the daughter; "she died two weeks ago; coughed 'erself all over blood an' then went asleep and never woke up."

"Wy didn't yer get ther doctor?"

"Meg did run for the doctor; but 'e said as how she was daid enough. 'E gave me a 'arf sovereign and took muvver away in a wooden ice-box."

"Ther blighted rotter! And she worth two pun at any 'orspittle!" thundered Tom, knowing well what the half-sovereign meant —that his wife's mortal remains had served as a clinical object-lesson to a class of medical students. "Where's the 'arf a quid, Polly? Give it art."

"Where's the 'arf quid!" sarcastically retorted his daughter, flying into a rage at her father's demand. "'Ow you think we're goin' to eat? 'Oo you think is agarn to pay the rent? It's all garn, garn seven days ago. Bloomin' rotter, yersel'! You up at the 'orspittle eatin' four meals a day, bein' stuffed wiv food! Only for the back yard an' the streets we'd all a starved afore you came back or took any notice."

It was all too true; for more than a week the three children had subsisted solely on what it was possible to pick up in the streets and the bits they were able to forage from the used tins brought in each day by old Williган. After dark the three would steal down to the rear yard and scrape out the interiors of the day's barrow-load of tins.

At times they found a sizable piece of half-rotted meat, or, perhaps, a moldy biscuit, overlooked by the cook who cast away the tin. These were all miserable bits of food at best, and, even for such, the children were obliged to battle with the horde of lean rats that infested the yard. O' Tins often heard the children rattling among the cans, but, thinking it the rats, would throw a few more tins toward the pile to scare away the supposed vermin.

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CHAPTER III

TOM TALKS

FOR three weeks Tom Brines lay on the cot and gazed out over the piles of stinking food-tins that filled the rear yard; the ankle healing very slowly on the starvation rations the children divided with their father.

On several occasions an attendant from the hospital came down, adjusted fresh dressings on the injured member, commented on the general peaked look of the entire Brines family and went away.

It is amazing how small a quantity of food will suffice to keep up the bodily functions of four people, bred and raised to starvation, and, somehow, the Brines family managed to live along from day to day. Tom never having found time to make many close friends outside the chemical works, no one came to see him, and the misery of little children is far too common a sight in Whitechapel to cause comment or stir.

Day after day Tom lay on his cot and thought and thought, gazing, meanwhile, on the ever-growing pile of food-tins below his window. Tom Brines had scarcely half the daily rations considered by a benign Government to be necessary for a man of his weight, and the thoughts of one so ill-nurtured and helpless can not be expected to flow along pleasant channels.

The sight of his three children struggling in their pitiful condition scarcely helped matters, and he soon stewed into a mental condition that would have at least deeply shocked Society, could Society have been made collectively aware of how highly responsible he held it to be for his present deplorable situation.

Closely following upon his having arrived at the conclusion that Society in general was wholly to blame for his condition, came thoughts to Tom Brines of how to reverse the situation with his oppressors. And the more he stewed over it, the blacker became his thoughts.

Each evening the children brought to their parent all the bits of torn or cast-aside newspapers they could pick up in the streets. These he eagerly read again and again, until he almost knew each paragraph by heart.

Strange as it may seem, the items about want and privation interested him most, and God knows there were enough of such in every bit of paper to give Tom Brines ample entertainment. Next to these he was concerned with the crimes daily reported from the city and its suburbs. After that he was attracted by politics and the passing yon and hither of men and women prominent in society.

ONE morning he hit upon an account of a riot by supposed anarchists in Lambeth. This entertained Tom Brines immensely, and he eagerly scanned each bit of paper the children brought in until he had the full and gruesome details of the burning of their retreat and the final shooting of the anarchists by the police.

As he lay on the cot thinking about this affair, continually gazing out of the rear window, the dominating idea of his future life came stealing into Tom Brines' dull head and took complete possession.

That day Tom managed to drag himself across the room, where he fashioned a sort of crutch from an old clothes-dryer that stood in the corner, and was soon hobbling about in quite a spry fashion. His next effort was to go below and interview his landlord. Tom expected to find the old man extremely solicitous regarding his overdue rent, and in an ugly temper.

This proved to be groundless suspicion, since O' Tins not only extended a warm welcome to his tenant, but, when he understood how nearly the abandoned children had been to absolute starvation, was extremely anxious to lend a helping hand.

"Nar, Brines," he wheezily said, "I picks up quite a bit o' food durin' the day, in kitchens and restaurants; you send them kiddies darn to me every night and I'll give 'em enough food so they needn't maul over them tins agarnst the bloomink rats, that's wot."

"Yus," answered Tom, "that's o' right for the kiddies, but wot abart me, eh? I'm agarn ter starve, eh? Thet's the way w'en a feller gets darn, everybody wants ter step on 'im! Wot abart me eatin', eh?"

The good-hearted O' Tins patiently thought a moment before he answered Tom's peevish complaint.

"I tell yer wort, young feller, my pipes are gettin' worser every day. It's 'ard to push the barrer abart an' 'oller at the same time. I 'aven't gort wind enough. Now,

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as soon as you can walk, come out wiv me and 'oller until you learns the rowt; then when you learns the rowt, I'll give you a barrer to go art alone."

Thus a working arrangement was consummated between the tin collector and crippled Tom. After a few trips about the city Tom discarded the makeshift crutch, and Williган devised a fairly passable substitute for the lost foot by taking an empty fruit-tin, filling the bottom with soft rags and having Tom insert his stump of ankle therein.

In the daylight hours the two men would pass through the streets gathering a huge load of tins in exchange for a few small pots and pans; the evenings were given over to melting the solder from the tins in a sort of portable furnace possessed by Williган, and to hammering flat the sections of tin thus made. Working together, through the days and evenings, these men soon became very intimate and talkative.

TOM, still possessing the appetite for news formed during his hours of convalescence on the cot, the children continued the habit of bringing to their father all the discarded newspapers and periodicals they could pick up in the streets each day. O' Tins, being unable to read, and Tom being too busy, the stale news was read aloud to the working men each evening by O' Tins' daughter, Eidel.

Eidel was a milliner's apprentice and pretended to considerable style, for Whitechapel, at any rate. Rather short, rather buxom, with a fine, clear, pink-and-white complexion, earnest eyes and a remarkably intelligent air, she early took an interest in Tom's three children and did her little best toward making them somewhat less of a discredit to the dirty neighborhood.

As Eidel finished reading each bit of newspaper the two men would talk over the subject matter, Tom vaunting his opinions in an arrogant manner, always construing every affair, no matter how distantly related, to the extreme discredit of Society. O'Tins would splutter out the converse opinion, seldom agreeing with Tom's rabid ideas, but rather taking the part of peaceful arbitrator between what Tom called "brines and bullion."

"It's naw use," Tom would say, "us poor folks 'as gort the brines; the bloods 'as gort all the posh"—he meant money—"an' a poor feller 'as gort to stiy darn; the minute 'e tries to climb hup they 'its 'im on the knuckles an' says, 'Garn back to yer sty, yer pig!' Look at me, I 'ad a start, what 'appened? I loses me foot, doctors cut it orf wivout as much as sayin' 'plize,' and leeves me to starve wiv only one trotter."

"Now, Brines!" Williган would protest, "you carn't keep a *good* man darn, no matter what. Shove 'im back an' 'e'll bounce up like a kiddie's rubber ball. Look at that toff, Sir Halbert Bunton, the bread king; 'as 'is millions now, jest orf bread, good bread. I knowed 'im, Brines, w'en 'e 'adn't a penny to his nime, or dicent clows to 'is back. 'Is wife mide five loaves of bread orf a borrowed shillin'; 'e sold 'em for two shillin'. The missis next mide ten loaves of bread an' 'e sold eight—they eat the hother two. Pretty soon 'e 'ad a 'ole bakery. Now 'e 'as forty bakeries an' makes ite 'undred an' sixty thousand loaves of bread a diy! Good bread, I know; I eat it hoften."

"An' wot's 'is nime?" here broke in Tom, "Sir Albert Bunton, *Sir* Albert, if you plize; 'es a toff, 'e gort the favor of the toffs, thet's wort 'e did, or 'e never'd 'a'been worth tuppence. 'Aven't yer gort any brines? Cawn't yer see you've gort to be a blood and get in ther bloods' favor? Look at all them lords, them hearls and jukes, *they* never does a stroke hov work, but *they* don't lose no laigs, *they* 'aven't any starvin' children, their wives don't get sold orf to the dissectin'-table for 'arf a quid, when she's worth two-pun of any doctor's posh.

"Look at all them fellers wort's in polertics, never lifts a finger, 'cept to draw their selleries, or sign a letter sayin' they'll see abart it next term. Everybody gets put hoff to next term, 'ceptin' the toffs; it's a bloody, bleedin', stinkin' shime! I'm sick an' tired of readin' all this rot about how the bloods is a-spendin' of their posh; I warnt some of it myself, I warnt to see some of these toffs workin', an' a-gettin' their laigs chawed off, an' a-goin' to 'orspittles; yus, an' a bein' sold off to dissectin'-tables fer 'arf a quid, too—the idea, 'arf a quid! If you 'ad any brines you'd think as I does, too."

"Brines, me lad," countered back O' Tins, "there 'as to be rich bloods, there 'as to be poor slobs like hus; it's the wi o' the world: some 'as, and some 'asn't; them as 'asn't should be content or shut up and work to get their share. Look hat yerself,

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Brines, you lost a good jorb, you lost your trotter. What 'appins? To-day, you gort a good jorb, you gort 'arf a good trotter, too, in thet ole can o' mine. What 'o! me lad, smile up! Times ar'n't 'arf as bad as you think they are; smile up, Brines me lad. Tike it from me, ef you 'ad 'arf the brines you think you 'ave you'd never lost your trotter at all. If I 'ad 'arf the brines I hort to 'ave I'd be like Sir Halbert Bunton, I'd be the tin king o' Whitechapel with my million o' tin cans a-sellin' every day, thet's whart!"

"O' Tins, you mike me blimed sick. I gort a good job! Yus, a good job for a poor starved rotter like me; but what 'ud it be for a toff, eh, what? I want as good a jorb as any blimed toff or any bloody feller in polertics 'as gort, thet's what I wants. Them as 'asn't should be content and keep quiet, eh? Well, you wait; them as 'as will be squeelin' pretty blimed soon. You wait; I gort an idea, besides a jorb, thet's what I gort!"

THUS the two men, hammering away at the bits of tin, would give and take through the long evenings, Eidel standing by, an amused listener, O'Tins wheezing and spluttering with greater vehemence as he became more excited, Tom venting his fuming spite in heavier blows on the sheets of wrinkled tin.

Tom now had a barrow and a regular route of his own through the city, which he patrolled every few days. From his peculiar substitute for a foot he became known among the back-door bargainers as "Tin Laig." One of the first things Tom discovered was that people seemed somehow to be unaccountably and easily startled by his presence on days when the light was weak, his tin foot being muffled—with a layer of rags outside as well as padded by them within. Whenever he would approach a woman kitchen-helper or a cook with his stereotyped and monotonous query: "Any o' tins ter trade, maddim?" the woman addressed would often jump as if a dog were about to bite her, put her hand to her heart and ejaculate:

"Mercy me! I never seed you comin'! Oh, wort a start you give me!"

Not being aware that nature and shoddy clothes had tinted him closely to the color of his environment, a dirty London street, Tom puzzled for some time over this odd circumstance, then began to take advantage of it in a sort of saturnine, malicious manner.

Finding his inconspicuousness to be much more pronounced on gray, rainy days, he would choose such an occasion and, walking slowly along, allow people to bump into him, finding much amusement in their consternation and profuse apologies, if it happened to be some courtly old man, or in their flood of billingsgate and curses if it were a rough working man.

To the latter he retorted in kind; with the old gentlemen he afforded himself great delight through returning sarcastic travesties of their gestures and words. Very often the gentlemen tipped him pennies, and on occasions he got even shillings as balm for the supposed injuries to feelings and physique suffered.

Tom did not know it; but in this conduct he was merely taking mean advantage of the fact that very few of us ever perfectly synchronize vision and thought.

Being much in the street, Tom soon got to recognizing people who happened, just then, to be basking in the lime-light of newspaper publicity, through comparing their appearance with the photographs and caricatures he noted in the scraps of papers he picked up here and there. These prominent characters were often made the subject of Tom's little private joke of being bumped into as they abstractedly walked along.

CHAPTER IV

THE CLIPPING FROM THE PAPER

O'TINS was a kind-hearted, good-natured fellow, or he would never have endured Tom's arrogant manner and constant complaints about ill usage. Furthermore, he was possessed of a considerable love for children and had taken quite a fancy to Tom's little ones, who showed decided improvement, both physically and mentally, under the liberal and more judicious course of feeding they received since Eidel had taken them in hand. Polly, the eldest, was now able to read, and supplemented the efforts of Eidel in entertaining her father and Williган each evening as they worked at flattening out the tins.

One evening Polly was asked by her father to read aloud a torn scrap of the New York *Planet*, evidently dropped by

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some tourist, and bearing the date of October 1, 1912. This article told of a new and powerful explosive compound lately discovered in America, and was as follows:

For several months experiments have been in progress in the excavations for the Grand Central Station with a new explosive called hyrox.

The new explosive has not been put upon the market because its discoverer, George Lezinsky, of 4— Broadway, decided that it should first stand the test of time. He and many experts who have tried it declared that hyrox has stood every test so far put upon it in mine work in Arizona, California and Nevada, quarry work in Illinois, submarine blasting in the Chicago River, and tunnel and outside work in and near this city.

While the materials of which commercial dynamite is composed are obtainable only in limited quantities, and are, therefore, expensive, the materials entering into the manufacture of hyrox are cheap and abundant. As stated by Mr. Lezinsky they are:

Chlorate of potash or chlorate of sodium, of which hyrox contains from fifty to eighty per cent. The entire cost of these materials is not more than three cents a pound when produced under the best advantages.

Ordinary American resin or calophony, of which hyrox contains from ten to twenty per cent., which has a commercial cost of about a cent a pound.

Ordinary commercial wheat, of which hyrox contains from five to ten per cent.

Low grade nitric acid, of which hyrox contains from five to ten per cent., being less than five per cent. of the quantity of nitric acid required in the manufacture of nitroglycerin, nitro starch, nitrate of ammonia, or any of the nitro explosive compounds.

Water.

One objection against dynamite is that it not only breaks up the substance in which it is inserted, but the concussion disturbs everything near it. Mr. Lezinsky recently carried out an experiment at South Amboy, New Jersey, which proved to his satisfaction that such would not be the case when hyrox was employed. He had in his plant there a block of concrete six by four and one-half by four feet, resting alongside a brick wall. In the concrete block he inserted a small charge of hyrox. The block was split up as cleanly as if done by a knife. The wall didn't seem to have been even jarred, in fact was entirely undamaged.

"Hyrox," says Mr. Lezinsky, "can be handled like cord-wood if not exposed to the action of fire. It burns very freely, but when not confined will not explode. When used on softer materials than concrete it either breaks them up into a fine powder or dissipates them entirely into particles and gases so impalpable they can scarcely be seen. Hyrox may be exploded by fuse or by electric spark, but only when closely confined, and the charge confines its direct exertions within a very small radius."

It is not only the safest, but one of the most powerful explosives yet discovered, if all reports are true.

"Well, wort do you think of thet?" said O' Tins. "Wy, some blighted rotter might blow up the 'ole of London for less'n a bob! I'll bet a 'arf quid some of them hana'chists 'll be er mikin' of that there hyrox stuff and blowin' hup Roosia afore thet there piper gets very stale."

"Oh, stow thet! Darn't yer know the Cizzar darn't allow no 'Merican pipers in his country?" said Tom. "'E knows a thing or two, 'e does. Wy, if them there Roosians found out habart 'yrox they'd all be a-mikin' of iron pills for the Cizzar's breakfast to-morrer mornin'. Wish some blighted Tommy in this country 'd make a few for them politicianers, jukes an' lords, wot's gort all the posh an' is a scrowdgin' us briny folks off inter the gutters.

"W'y, listen here, O' Tins, this very arternoon thet bloomin' Lord Careton, wot 'as so much to say in the 'ouse abart crown lands an' a-keepin' the budget darn, tried to scrowdge me off the street w'ere I 'as as much a right to walk as 'e 'as. Nearly knocked me darn, 'e did. For 'arf a bob I'd a guv 'im some 'yrox outern the top o' my clinched fist, I would. 'Ow, me good fellow,' 'e says, 'pon my word, I didn't see you a-comin'. I beg your pardon. Are you 'urt? 'Ere's a shillin' for you, me fellow!' Me fellow! the idear!"

"Well, Tom, me lad, it appears to me as 'is lordship passed the matter orf nicely hindeed," wheezed O' Tins, who was in no way familiar with Tom's settled habit of exacting shillings and apologies from the upper classes in this manner. 'E come darn very 'andsomely, very 'andsomely hindeed; you gort a shillin', didn't you?"

"'Es, but wort's a shillin'! An' him wiv bobs so thick at 'is 'ouse the maid likely 'as to sweep 'em art the door afore they can walk through the 'allways. I was hup at 'is kitchen last week a-gettin' tins from 'is old cook, Martha Troonchal, an' I gives you my word, O' Tins, the floors was covered with plush carpets thet blimed thick and 'eavy I'd be glad to use 'em for mattresses to sleep on, thet I would. I tell you wort, O' Tins, I'm agarn to make some of thet there 'yrox myself, an' when I do I'll give them toffs what's what, s'help me, I will that! Here, Polly, you give me thet bit o' newspaper. I knows a chemist 'oo'll stike me to some o' them there things wort it says 'yrox is mide of. O' Tins, you wite; just wite. I lost my trotter; some one is a-goin' to lose 'is head to pay for it!"

O' Tins and his daughter, considering this last blatant boast of Tom Brines as on a par

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with most of his talk, paid very slight attention to it, even when they saw him messing about the furnace many times in later evenings with bottles and packages of powder. Tom, on the other hand, suddenly developed a new streak in his perverse nature; he seemed disinclined to engage in conversation with other people, yet formed a habit of continually talking to himself in a dull undertone.

About all one could catch of this monologue was the oft-repeated statements: "If I 'ad any brines! I'll show em! 'Arf a quid! I'll show 'em!"

These were not definite to be sure, yet they indicated Tom's inner state of mind. If at this time he had only drunk some of the strange compounds he was so fond of mixing up in old pots and cans, while it might have been momentarily unpleasant for Tom Brines, certainly, would have been mightily for the good of his immortal soul.

CHAPTER V

MR. CHITTLES FINDS A SARDINE-TIN

THE crime of the exploding men was still unsolved, notwithstanding the fact that there were clever men in Scotland Yard, clever men a-plenty, always had been such; yet there had also been previously unsolved crimes a-plenty, many miscarriages of justice, many criminals living a long and pleasant life, dying a perfectly natural death in their own beds at an advanced age.

In polite fiction the detective quite invariably gets his man, the right man; the criminal reaps his just deserts; the virtuous are duly rewarded with happiness. In life this is, unfortunately, not always true. The innocent do suffer; the astute detective does go astray in his premise.

Some one has said that clever rascals are not often, perhaps never, caught through police acuteness; but rather through their own propensity for failing to discount accidents. One single accident, the misplacing of a microscopic dot, may make clear a counterfeiting plot that has required years of time and half a score of super-clever brains to create and perfect.

Another equally discerning observer has remarked that the blundering detective quite as frequently runs down the criminal as does his more sagacious brother worker. Thus, the first proposition being true, our second student would logically maintain that, if the entire available detective force of Scotland Yard were all concentrated on searching for the criminal, or criminals, responsible for those strange explosions of prominent men in the streets of London, some unit among them could scarcely fail to fall, accidentally, upon a clue, sooner or later.

It was now thirty days since the last exploding man had startled the city, the full force of Scotland Yard had been focused on these crimes, yet the carefully kept records were as barren of anything tangible as though the affairs had never occurred. Four men, all of unusual prominence, had exploded, utterly without sense or reason; there was no apparent cause. That was all; absolutely nothing more to be said.

As a last resort the head of Scotland Yard detailed one of its men as permanent bodyguard to each notable person who might be suspected of either a disposition to blow up spontaneously or to be blown up by some outside agency. Thus every member of the Upper House, for it was still suspected that the entire affair might be some strange plot to annihilate the House of Lords, went about his home, to his club, to the theater, or elsewhere, with a constant presence at his elbow. This was not a pleasant condition of affairs.

Imagine it yourself, sitting down to dinner in the Savoy restaurant some evening with a stodgy police officer standing beside your chair, clearly expressing the prospect in every look and action that he confidently expected you to blow up with the next sip of sherry or the next deep puff at your cigarette. It not only kept those under surveillance in a continuous blue funk, but it was equally wearing on the police officers themselves; their lot was made neither easy nor pleasant.

THE intervening thirty days since the last explosion had produced a period of remarkably fine weather; the sun condescending to shed its rays on the city for the entire month without a break. The morning of the thirty-first day, however, brought forth a typical London fog, a regular "pea-souper," and passage to and fro about the city was not only a matter requiring some skill, but was also fraught with considerable danger from colliding busses, motor-cars and cabs.

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On this morning Lord Ulster Cannonwrack, formerly Home Secretary, and but very recently appointed First Lord of the Admiralty, found it necessary to visit the Home Office on a matter of urgent business connected with his late political position. Under ordinary circumstances his lordship would have taken the trip by motor-car; but both the closed and the open car being out of commission at that particular hour, it was necessary to make the journey in some other manner.

Lord Ulster, being classed by Scotland Yard as among those personages who might be expected to explode whenever a suitable opportunity occurred, was consequently provided with an official bodyguard in the person of Mr. James Chittles.

Lord Ulster, not being afflicted with timidity in any appreciable degree, had tried his utmost to lose Chittles, but without avail; Chittles stuck tighter, if possible, than the proverbial porous plaster, said Chittles having very few praiseworthy characteristics other than being a sticker.

He was about as dumb and unresponsive a mortal as one could find in a ten-days' journey, colorless as to character, vapid. Chittles seldom had more than a single idea at one time, and that one he would hug and cling to with the tenacity of a bulldog. His chief having ordered him to remain constantly with Lord Ulster until further orders, it would have been quite as easy to pry open an oyster with a wooden toothpick as to get Chittles far away from his object without good and sufficient reason.

Chittles was fat, florid and taciturn; his almost hairless head glowed and shone like a big pink billiard-ball; his overlarge jowls encroached on the neck space usually devoted to collar, and made necessary the wearing of the odd throat adornment popularly known as a "bobby's 'arf-choker," and ending in a point under each ear.

Chittles may have had warm family ties; Chittles may have had many close friends among his associates on the police force, yet one could never guess these facts from anything Chittles did or said, his usual conversational discourse being limited to the shortest possible jerky answers to any remarks thrown his way. That Chittles was ambitious one might gather from the dutiful manner and precision with which he carried out the orders of his superior officers; your unambitious man is invariably a sloven and a slighter.

MR. JAMES CHITTLES resembled the popular conception of a detective about as much as a walrus resembles a sylph. Being excessively fat, this special representative of Scotland Yard perspired freely under excitement or unusual mental exertion, when great beads of moisture would stand out all over his florid face and pink poll. On such occasions Chittles would produce a handkerchief about the size of a sheet and industriously mop up the excess dampness from his features; it was thus easy to determine the exact ardor of Chittles's mental process by the waving of the miniature sheet.

Lord Ulster's two motor-cars being out of the question as a means of transportation to the Home Office on the morning in question, he consulted with Chittles as to how they should journey thither.

"Shall we chance a walk, or 'phone for a taxi? Somehow I feel like walking this morning. I fancy it's rather safer in this dense fog," queried his lordship of his shadow, otherwise Chittles.

Chittles, his mind constantly running on explosives, had no love for either taxicabs or motor-cars, and he promptly pronounced the final decision:

"Get a growler, your ludship, safest thing on wheels hin fair or hin fog."

Which same sage advice was probably very true, since the usual London growler seldom moves at a pace sufficient to make accident from impact or breakdown a very serious matter. Consequently a growler was summoned from the nearest corner, drew noisily up to the door, and Lord Ulster, with Mr. James Chittles at his elbow, left the protecting doorway to step within, Chittles holding an umbrella over his lordship's form as they passed smartly across the walk.

Between the confusion of appearances caused by the fog and the shadow cast by the umbrella, the two men suddenly found themselves coming smack up against, not the cab, but an old two-wheeled barrow filled with empty food-tins. The tins scattered, clatteringly, in all directions. Chittles, puffing like a grampus, springing to his feet, assisted Lord Ulster to gain his, and was peering about for the growler, just as the cabby stepped toward them, accompa-

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nied by a fat old man in blue glasses, who began to pick up the rolling tins and toss them into the barrow which he had quickly righted.

"'Ere you, ole feller, what you mean by a-leavin' of thet barrer there in the middle of the walk?" said Chittles to the old man. "I'd 'ave you hup for 'arf a bob for obstructin' the walks, thet I would, ole feller!"

"I begs your pardon; very sorry, sir; no hoffence meant," said O' Tins. "Out o' your gangway in a jiffy, sir," and he wheeled quickly off into the fog as Mr. James Chittles gave him the usual London bobby's shove and an especially ugly look.

"'Ere's yer keb, sir," broke in the cabby at this point, "hall a waitink, sir; 'orse 'es crizy to be hof, a champin' at 'is bit like a two-year-old. Reet this w'y, sir. Very good, sir; reet in theer, sir. Where to? Ow yus, sir, 'Ome Hoffice; very good; be there afore you can s'y your pr'yers, sir."

THE two men getting inside and the driver mounting to his box, the rather ancient vehicle vanished in the fog, proceeding in the same direction as that taken by O'Tins with the barrow. It must be acknowledged, however, that the cabby's previous statement about the horse being crazy to be off and champing at his bit like a two-year-old colt seemed sadly discredited by the pace maintained thereafter.

There are precious few things that feaze a London cabby, and fog, even a regular "pea souper," is not one of these; he steers fairly straight, but not rapidly, no, never rapidly, to his proper destination by a sort of sixth sense, far beyond the ken of ordinary wayfarers. Thus, within a reasonable period of time, this particular growler arrived at its journey's end, and the affable and loquacious driver got down from his box and started to open the cab door preparatory to assisting his passengers to alight.

Misled by the darkness of the foggy day, the cabby had not drawn as close to the curb as usual, having come to a standstill some four feet or so to one side. As the driver stood holding open the cab door he found himself suddenly knocked down by a barrow and nearly buried in an enormous gathering of food-tins that piled about him as they fell from the barrow.

"Lor' bless my soul!" said the First Lord of the Admiralty, "is it raining empty tins all over London to-day? 'Tis the strangest thing I ever witnessed; that previous fellow surely can not have kept pace with us, slow as we have traveled."

"Hi'll very soon see abart this, your luds-hip!" said Chittles, springing quickly out of the cab and rushing about the immediate vicinity in search of the barrow-owner. "Hi'll 'ave 'im hup this time, thet I certainly will!"

Chittles, however, did not have anybody up; for this particular barrow seemed to be entirely without any particular owner, and it was, manifestly, not the same barrow-load of tins that had participated in the previous accident, being very much larger, newer, and with wheels painted a bright red, whereas the other barrow had been a small affair, pretty well worn out and painted no particular color at all.

There was obviously no owner about, nobody within sight, although Chittles did half imagine he caught sight of a limping, indistinct figure several times in the fog, and thought he heard a sardonic chuckle accompanied by the ejaculation:

"Hanother one o' them bleedin' toffs; hi'll get 'im yet; 'es gort the bullion, but hi've gort the brines."

These snatches of talk were put down by Chittles as coming from people passing on the opposite side of the street, and he gave up further search for the barrow-owner, kicked aside the rolling tins and assisted his lordship to alight from the cab.

After dismissing the cabby the First Lord of the Admiralty and his attendant guardian made their stumbling way through the fog, up the steps and into the Home Office, where they remained for some two hours. What the First Lord of the Admiralty did in the Home Office does not concern us; and, as for Chittles, it is enough to say that he never failed to keep very close to Lord Ulster's elbow, that he thought much, in his rather dull Scotland Yard way, of this plague of empty tin cans, and made several confidential personal promises that he would "'ave 'im up yet, if he ever laid hands on another barrow-pusher."

AFTER completing the Home Office errand his lordship decided, on his own responsibility, that a public taxicab would be more safe for the homeward journey than another growler, and an attendant was, therefore, despatched

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to summon one. The return journey was accomplished without further adventures among tin cans, and the two men alighted in front of Lord Ulster's town house within a very much shorter period of time than it had required to go to the Home Office. Deputing to Chittles the duty of settling with the chauffeur, Lord Ulster stepped lightly toward his own doorway and, for one brief second or two, was lost to the sight of his persistent police guardian in the dense fog.

Chittles, turning smartly toward the door after handing the chauffeur his fare, was suddenly knocked backward into the street by a vast rush of gaseous air, heard a terrific explosion that nearly burst his ear-drums, and realized immediately that the continually expected had at last occurred; Lord Ulster Cannonwrack, First Lord of the Admiralty, had blown up!

Mr. James Chittles was fat, he was unwieldy, yet the astonishing rapidity with which he regained his feet and rushed toward the spot from which the explosion had been heard would have done great credit to many a smaller, spryer man. Just then, as if the force of the explosion had, in itself, dissipated the fog, the sun broke through its surrounding clouds of murky atmosphere and shed a few sickly rays on the sidewalk thereabout.

It was all too evidently true: Lord Ulster had exploded; yet, contrary to the last two previous cases, his disappearance had not been quite complete; his silk topper lay upon the walk unharmed, and beside it lay a small sardine-tin that had been once opened and subsequently sealed up again with solder in a very crude manner.

Chittles, eyes like saucers, exuding moisture all over his florid face and bare poll, instantly snatched up the sardine-tin and, as he did so, was acutely aware of the rattling sound made by a barrow-load of tins vanishing rapidly in the fog as it melted away in the distance.

"By jolly!" he exclaimed. "By jolly, it's 'im what done it!"

The report of the explosion soon collected a crowd of curious people, among whom were several members of the regular patrolling force. Quickly explaining the bare fact of Lord Ulster's explosion to these men, Chittles then made off in the direction from whence had come the sounds of the barrow-load of tins rattling over the pavements.

His efforts to find him were fruitless, however, since no clear trace of the barrow-pusher could be discovered; many people heard him, yet none had been able to distinguish his appearance with sufficient distinctness to make description possible. Abandoning his pursuit for the time being, Chittles next proceeded toward headquarters to hand in his report of the occurrence.

CHAPTER VI

ONE LESS SCOTLAND-YARDER

AFTER some little wait in an outer office Mr. James Chittles was admitted to the inner sanctum of the active head of Scotland Yard, Sir Edward Arkdale, a person just at that particular moment in most uncommon ill humor. The telephone reports of the explosion had reached Sir Edward Arkdale and they did not please him, still less did he find it possible to derive any degree of pleasure from the presence, freely perspiring and waving a great white handkerchief, before him at this exact moment.

"Chittles, you are an ass!" bellowed Sir Edward Arkdale, "an unmitigated ass and a muddler! Did you not receive explicit instructions to remain constantly at Lord Ulster's elbow, night and day?"

"Yes, sir!" answered Chittles; "I was with 'is ludship, sir, when the haffair occurred."

"With him? Why didn't you explode then, too? Might have been better if you had. How near were you to Lord Ulster?" exclaimed Sir Edward, firing questions at the stolid Chittles like a Gatling gun, without waiting for answers. "Why didn't you prevent the explosion? Why didn't you summon assistance immediately?"

"The fog was very dense, sir; his ludship had taken scarcely two steps from me when 'he exploded; there was nobody abart, thet I can swear to, sir. I was fair knocked darn by the hexplosion; but I gort up at once, sir, looked all abart very carefully, the sun comin' out for a second or two just then. I ham very certain 'is ludship hexploded not four feet from me; but 'ow 'e did it, thet's beyond me, sir."

"Was there no trace of Lord Ulster left behind, beside the silk hat? Did you question the cab driver? Did you examine the ground about with extreme care?"

Now, according to all rules of proper police procedure, Mr. James Chittles should

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have fully informed his chief about the sardine-tin he had picked up beside Lord Ulster's silk hat; yet he did not do so, even though his right hand, stuffed into his coat pocket, was at that instant fingering the very article in question.

Chittles, as has before been recorded, was ambitious. Dame Fortune had, so to speak, stepped fairly on the toes of Mr. James Chittles; had placed within his possession the one, single tangible clue to be discovered in all this carnival of odd crimes, and he did not propose to relinquish it or to give it into other hands to be followed up, not he. With his bulldog nature he would hang on until the clue developed into a criminal or became worn out. Thus Chittles's further reports to Sir Edward Arkdale steered as carefully clear of the sardine-tin as though it were about to explode at any moment.

THEIR conversation being frequently interrupted by insistent calls on the desk 'phone from people in authority who wished to know what the head of Scotland Yard was doing in regard to this latest development in the series of odd explosions, Sir Edward Arkdale's temper did not improve as he listened to the complete report of what his deputy had to say. In fact, as Chittles's barren statements came to an abrupt close, the chief of Scotland Yard nearly exploded himself from excess of choler.

"Chittles!" he shouted, "you are suspended from the service until further notice, suspended without pay! Now get out of my sight as rapidly as you can. Don't let me set eyes on your face again until these dastardly explosions are cleared up. Come, get out, quick!"

It may be that Mr. James Chittles grinned as he left the presence of his fiery-minded chief; certainly he did not appear to be cast down by any great sense of sorrow by the sentence of banishment from Scotland Yard that had just been pronounced upon him; neither did his subsequent conduct give evidence of either despair or low spirits.

Chittles had ambition; Chittles had, or rather thought he had, a clue, and Chittles had a big idea, all of which was sufficient to keep a man of his peculiar temperament oblivious to all things save the before-mentioned trinity. The ambition of this fat, stodgy walrus of a man was to win a reputation as a great detective; the big idea was to capitalize the tiny sardine-can clue and turn it into the great reputation.

The first move of Mr. James Chittles in transforming his sardine-box clue into a criminal was to go immediately to his home and open the aforesaid sardine-box. A more intelligent person might have hesitated before undertaking this; or, at least, would have started the operation very cautiously; Chittles, however, neither hesitated nor observed any marked degree of caution. With a hammer and a chisel he pried off the crudely soldered lid, disclosing to view beneath two small compartments separated from each other by a soldered tin division containing a small round opening.

One of these compartments was filled with a pale, moist, granular powder, the other with a carefully curled thin fuse nearly fifty feet in length; the fuse passed through the small opening in the partition and came to an end in the pale granular powder. One end of this fuse had evidently been lit, but for some unaccountable reason had become extinguished before burning more than a few inches.

Even the somewhat slow-working brain of Mr. James Chittles was now fully equal to reasoning out the use of this peculiar sardine-box. The pale, moist powder was, probably, an explosive compound, the long fuse was first lighted, the sardine-tin was completely sealed up, save for two or three almost microscopic holes in the cover; when, in course of time, the slow-burning fuse reached the confined powder something would happen.

"By jolly," muttered Chittles to himself, as he surveyed the very simple but curious bomb before him, "it's as clear as a duck-pond; thet tin collector 'as a-bin mikin' these ugly bombs an' blowin' hup folks whenever 'e felt like it. W'y 'e must be crizy; 'e's no hanarchist, 'e's northin' but a bloomin' W'itechapel barrer-pusher. I'll get 'im heasy."

HAVING settled these facts to his own great personal satisfaction, Chittles next gave profound study to the more difficult problem of how to metamorphose this very solid explosive clue into the elusive bubble, reputation. He wished to carry the entire affair to successful conclusion unaided, yet, at the same

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time, he desired to prepare the field for a full and complete newspaper exploitation when the matter came to a head, and he, not Scotland Yard, must have all the credit.

Chittles's method of attaining this end may be fairly guessed from two circumstances that occurred on the following day. In a dingy old office-building, not far from the Bow Street police court, there suddenly blossomed forth on a battered old door a sizable white card somewhat crudely lettered with the following statement:

JAMES CHITTLES

CRIMINAL INVESTIGATOR

INTERVIEWS BY APPOINTMENT ONLY

DROP LETTERS BELOW

On this same day, in the morning, the following small item of news was handed in at the office of the London *Times* by a fat, bald-headed individual and, through either accident or oversight, strangely enough, found a place at the bottom of a close-printed column of information regarding the explosion through which England had lost her First Lord of the Admiralty:

James Chittles, representing Scotland Yard, the only person with Lord Ulster Cannonwrack at the hour of this sad accident, has been temporarily suspended from duty. It is reported that James Chittles will henceforth give his time to a private investigation of this series of crimes from his headquarters at Clum House, Bow Street.

Slight as was that simple paragraph, it was yet ample to awaken the bloodhounds of the printed page. In less than forty minutes the dingy, dirty hallway outside the office-room of Mr. James Chittles, Criminal Investigator, was crowded well-nigh to suffocation with representatives of the press. They scented a clue, they were off to rout it out. But the door was locked tight and fast, no amount of rattling and pounding could produce even a sound of either protest or welcome from within.

One eager scribbler applied his eye to the keyhole; nothing, not even the sight of furniture, greeted that same eager eye; within the limited radius of his vision there were merely bare floors, bare walls and curtainless windows. The caretaker of the building was appealed to; still nothing. He was about as barren of fruitful information as a clam; knowing little, he could impart less.

Finally the gathered press representatives signed a round-robin appeal for an interview, dropped it within the letter-slot of Mr. James Chittles's office door and departed, all save one, an unimportant little fellow who had hopes that the ex-member of Scotland Yard's force might turn up later. But Chittles did not turn up, neither on that day, nor for many other days that followed. No, indeed! He was closely occupied otherwhere.

CHAPTER VII

A VISIT TO MITCHERS ALLEY

ON THE second day succeeding his suspension from Scotland Yard and the two occurrences narrated above there began for Chittles a settled siege of snooping and snuffling about the streets and alleyways of Whitechapel, which same locality, being rather a mazy, mixed-up sort of neighborhood, did not immediately produce the man for whom he searched.

For three days and nights one might have tracked Chittles about by the waving of his sheet-like handkerchief, so freely did the perspiration flow on that pink head of his under the excitement of eager search. Of barrows there were many; they bumped into him at every corner, they prodded him along at every crossing, and, were his shoes not made of that square-toed stoutness usually worn by police workers, the feet of Chittles would have been well marked with bruises, so often were they crossed by barrow-wheels in his slow progress through the narrow, tangled byways of Whitechapel. But the barrow for which he searched was not of these.

At last, on the evening of the fourth day, the diligent efforts of Chittles were rewarded by sight of a gigantic barrow-load of empty food-tins moving directly toward him as he stood on the corner of Great Donegal Street and Mitchers Alley, which latter, being a blind alley, terminated at the very front entrance of the house inhabited by O' Tins himself. As Chittles gazed from the corner his view included little save the huge moving barrow and a pair of legs beneath it, one foot of said pair of legs being missing and replaced by a peculiar, but serviceable, round tin substitute.

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The ex-representative of Scotland Yard was obliged to flatten his obese form quite close against the building in order to allow the barrow passageway into the alley, consequently it left him little room to wave the customary sheet in mopping off the perspiration induced by his extreme eagerness to get a fair view of this barrow-pusher. A view he did get, however, and it produced a disappointment.

"Blime the luck, it's nort 'im!" muttered Chittles, as Tom Brines clattered off down Mitchers alley. "Thet's nort the old man wort was a 'angin' round Lord Hulster's 'ouse at all. I'd better foller 'im, though; mebbe 'e an' the ole feller with the blue glasses works for the same dealer."

Tom Brines, being quite alert these days, had not failed to take note of Mr. James Chittles fully as closely as Chittles had observed him, and he turned about just as Chittles began his progress down the alley.

"Right 'o! I knows 'oo you are, me lad," soliloquized Tom. "I've seed thet 'ere big face afore, and nort so very long back, either. Come on, grampus, much good it'll do you!" and Tom lagged purposely to allow Chittles opportunity to catch up with him.

As Chittles fell in behind Tom's limping footsteps, he considered it diplomatic to open a conversation.

"'Ello, me lad! can you tell me where a feller may sell a load of tins? I 'ave a fruit-pie bakery in the city, an' I gort ther 'ole cellar full of hempty tins, bin accumulatin' for two years."

"Oh, it's tins you worn't to sell, eh? You're very sure it's tins, eh? I thort as 'ow mebbe you 'ad some pork to dispose hof, pork jowls for hinstance, eh?" answered Tom, with a chuckle at his own supposed wit, which same form of subtle humor was entirely thrown away on matter-of-fact Chittles, who imagined himself to be carrying not more than a pound or two of excess flesh at the very most. "Well, my livin' skellington, come along o' me and I'll show you w'ere you can sell all the tins you've gort, yus, an' twice over, too."

TOM had by this time arrived at the entrance to O'Tins's domicile, and he directed Chittles to proceed within, while he wheeled his great barrow-load of empty tins through a passageway to the rear yard.

The door stood open and Chittles passed through the hallway directly into O'Tins's back kitchen, the room that held the portable furnace and the two work-benches where Tom and the old man spent their evenings flattening out the unsoldered tins. O'Tins himself was busy hammering away at a sheet of metal and looked up in astonishment as Chittles's enormous bulk crowded itself into the overfull kitchen.

"'Ello! 'Ello! what can I do for you, my friend?" cried O'Tins.

Chittles's eyes required several seconds to adjust themselves to the uncertain light of the room, which was furnished wholly by the blazing furnace; but, when they did so, the great handkerchief came into instant action; Chittles' thermometer of brain action was working overtime, and he failed even to hold back the exclamation that leaped to his lips:

"It's 'im, by jolly, it's 'im!"

With his supposed quarry before him he scarcely knew what to say or do, and sitting down on the nearest object to hand, Chittles stared at O'Tins with wide open eyes and mouth.

At last, from some corner of his cavernous anatomy, Chittles resurrected that lost voice.

"I gort some tins to sell."

"You 'ave," answered O'Tins, "well I darn't buy tins, I trades for 'em, twenty-five tins buys a pan, fifty tins a pot, and a 'undred tins is good for hanything I gort on my barrer. 'Ow many tins you gort?"

As O'Tins rattled off his regular back-door recitation the eager eyes of Chittles roved about the room; it looked promising and suspicious; the portable furnace, the ragged cakes of melted solder, many emptied sardine-tins, all pointed to the clue he had found a few days previous, and, from thenceforth, it became a firmly settled fact in Chittles's mind that the person talking to him was the author of the strange explosions that had turned London topsyturvy, producing his suspension from the Scotland Yard pay-roll. But how to get his man, that was the thing that puzzled Chittles.

"'Ow many I gort? Well, I 'ave a 'ole cellar full. You see I run a fruit-pie bakery up Bow Street way, an' these 'ere tins they been accumulatin' for two years. Fill the 'ole cellar, they do now, an' I warnt 'em cleaned out. As to esactly 'ow many there hare, I don't rightly know; suppose you come hup an' 'ave a look at em?"

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"Right o! I'll be hup to see you at ten o'clock to-morrer. You just print the haddress on thet there scrap o' piper," answered O'Tins.

Chittles wrote down the address of his Bow Street office, and, not wishing to arouse undue suspicion by making excuse for a longer stay, prepared to take his departure.

IN WORKING his necessarily slow progress toward the door, Chittles purposely made a considerable detour about the room, passing close to the portable furnace used by the old man in melting away the solder from the tins. Chittles wished to obtain a close and photographic view of everything that the crowded little back kitchen contained.

As he came close to the furnace his eyes nearly popped out of his head; there, within less than a foot of the blazing coals, stood a can three-quarters full of what Chittles felt certain was the same identical moist granular powder that had filled one compartment of the sardine-tin he had picked up on the walk near where Lord Ulster Cannonwrack met his sad end. Chittles lost no time in putting a safe distance between himself and that big tin of explosive.

"By jolly!" muttered Chittles, as he reached the outside atmosphere, "'S enough o' the blimed stuff in there to blow hup the 'ole o' London! 'E must be crizy, lettin' thet there hexplosive lay around 'is furnace like thet! 'E must be crizy!"

Just around the corner of Mitchers Alley and Great Donegal Street was a tiny little shop bearing above its entrance a swinging, creaking, rusty-hinged sign announcing, noisily, that John Mitchers sold tobacco, snuff, cigars and cigarettes within. Here Chittles entered and inquired for a book of cigarette-papers. A little withered up old man, with transparent skin, great horn-rimmed spectacles and abundant hair, yellow-white in color, handed out the paper from behind a low, dirty counter, took the pennies and threw them into a box located somewhere in the darkness below the counter.

Chittles, seeking information, knew no other way than to go direct to the point.

"You know thet ole feller down the alley thet collects ole tins?"

The old man peered closely for a moment at his questioner before he made answer:

"Strynger hereabouts, ar'n't you?"

"Yus," answered Chittles, "came darn to sell some ole tins. I run a fruit-pie bakery up in the city."

"I thought so; folks in this quarter don't arsk me if I *knows* anybody, they knows wivout a-arskin' thet I knows *everybody*. I've lived on this identical spot for eighty-seven years, come next Whitsuntide; I knows every woman, man, boy, girl or babby thet has lived or died here in all thet time. W'y, Mitchers Alley is a-nimed arter me. I owned it once, afore I lost my money."

Chittles, not caring to act the part of listener to a detailed history of the neighborhood and each individual inhabitant thereof, brought the loquacious old man back to his muttons:

"Yus, I see; but this ole feller thet collects tins, wort's his nime, anyway?"

"O' Tins, everybody calls 'im, but 'is nime's Giles Willigan; 'e's lived 'ere for forty years; 'e's bin a-collectin' tins all thet time, too; must 'a' lugged many a million of 'em on thet barrer o' his. 'E's gort a 'art bigger nor a hox, too. You see them three little kiddies in there? Well, 'e took them in when they was 'arf starved; 'is daughter she's a heddicatin' ov em, an 'e's a feedin' ov 'em.

"Their farver, thet's Brines, 'im wiv the tin laig, 'e's a good-for-nothin' rotter; 'e goes hout arfter tins when 'e feels like it, but most o' the time e' darn't feel like it. 'E'd ruvver sit in the kitchen, 'ammer hout tin an' shoot hoff 'is gab; 'e's the gabbiest rotter I ever see; thinks 'e's gort a 'ead an' brines, when all 'e's gort is a mouth an' a load o' talk. 'E's a blimed rotter, thet's wort 'e is; but O'Tins, 'im as I said was nimed Willigan, 'e's the best 'earted feller in all London, thet 'e his."

Chittles decided to break in here with a leading question:

"Is 'e one o' them bloody hanarchists?"

"Ho! Ho! Ho!" roared the withered-up old man, displaying an amazing amount of lung power for one of his frail physique. "O'Tins a hanarchist? Well, well, thet's a good one! Didn't I tell you 'e 'as a 'art as big as a hox? Hanarchists darn't 'ave 'arts; they 'ave 'eads, but no 'arts. Take thet there Brines, now 'e might be a hanarchist, 'e's mean enough, an' 'e *thinks* 'e's gort brines enough, but 'e's too much of a blimed coward; 'e wouldn't never kill anybody, nort 'im; 'e'd kick 'em when they were darn

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and 'e'd run quick enough when they gort up."

Now this was a clear lead for James Chittles, but being a man of few ideas and holding to those with the stubbornness of a bulldog, he did not take it. Satisfied in his own mind that O' Tins was the man he wanted, nothing was likely to shake him from his quarry, and Chittles left the shop without further questioning of the talkative old tobacconist.

Chittles hung about the vicinity of Mitchers Alley for an hour or two, undecided what course to pursue. He had seen and heard quite enough to satisfy himself that O' Tins was the man he wanted; that a raid on O' Tins's shop would produce ample evidence, with his own relation of what he had found, seen and heard at the death of Lord Ulster, to make a convincing story; but how to turn all this to his own credit, without calling in the early assistance of his chief at Scotland Yard, was the puzzling feature of the case. He finally decided that the thing was impossible of consummation without the help of Scotland Yard.

CHAPTER VIII

CHITTLES MAKES AN ARREST

MUSING on these matters, Chittles made his way to the Bow Street room where he found and read the round-robin left by the press representatives. He had expected something of the sort, but not quite this; a score and more of press representatives all begging for an immediate interview was rather more than Chittles dared hope for. The round-robin, however, solved a portion of Chittles's difficulty about turning what he knew of the explosions to his sole individual account, and he addressed a duplicate of the following letter to each name signed to the round-robin:

DEAR SIR:

If you will kindly call at the office of James Chittles, criminal investigator, Room 14, Clum House, Bow Street, at ten o'clock to-morrow, Thursday morning, full particulars of the progress made by the writer in running down the man responsible for the five disastrous explosions recently occurring in the streets of London will be given you. I have him.

Yours truly,
JAMES CHITTLES,
Criminal Investigator,
Late Scotland Yard.

Chittles, considering this epistle to be a very clever and subtle piece of workmanship, indulged in many self-congratulatory chuckles as he affixed the stamps and posted the letters. After completing this undertaking Chittles proceeded to the home of Sir Edward Arkdale, head of Scotland Yard, knowing well that his chief would not be found at headquarters at this late hour of the evening.

After making his presence known at the door and expressing to the butler the extreme importance of his errand, Chittles was shown up-stairs and into Sir Edward Arkdale's private study. Sitting before a comforting cannel-coal fire, smoking an imported perfecto of his own private brand, the head of Scotland Yard was in a much more amiable frame of mind than governed his actions upon the occasion of his last interview with Chittles.

"Sampler tells me you have something very important to communicate, Chittles. What is it? Have you any news of this dastardly criminal who is killing off the House of Lords one by one? Have you a clue?"

Chittles, his full course of conduct firmly settled in his mind, proceeded by announcing his ultimate climax at the very start:

"Yes, sir, I 'ave a clue; I 'ave the man himself what's been a doin' hit, sir! Thet is, I know where 'e is."

"Great heavens! Chittles, you don't tell me? It's incredible! How in the world did you get him? Where is he? Are you absolutely certain you have the right man?" exclaimed Sir Edward, pouring forth his usual rapid-fire series of Gattling-gun questions.

Chittles, however, having announced his main fact, did not propose to be led on to tell the entire story until satisfied of a few small matters that concerned his personal ambition.

"Just one moment, sir. It is hunderstood, I believe, sir, that I ham suspended from the force without pay. Do I put thet rightly, sir?"

"Of course, Chittles, that was my earlier decision; yet, if you have made such progress as you intimate in these cases, you will be reinstated immediately, immediately."

"I 'ave no wish to be re-hinstated at present, sir, nort until hafter this matter is fully explined. I took my suspension as quite

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final, sir; thet is, quite final for the tim being, and I should wish it hexpressly hunderstood thet the hinformation what I 'ave to furnish comes in my private capacity, strictly in my private capacity, and thet I am to 'ave full charge of arresting the criminal. In duty to myself, I must hinsist upon the last stipulation, sir."

"Well, well, of course it is most unusual; yet if you insist upon furnishing your information only under those conditions I can make no possible objection," answered Sir Edward.

"Thenk you, sir, thenk you very kindly; Hi will now expline my progress since leaving your hoffice hunder sentence of suspension without sellery: 'Avin' a family to look hafter, sir, it was necessary thet I find some employment as a means of supporting them, an' I hopened a hoffice in the Clum 'Ouse building in Bow Street, as a criminal hinvestigator, hexpecting in this way, sir, to find quite a bit to do until re-hinstated; sir," declared Chittles, mixing up his aspirates under stress of emotion more freely than usual.

"This is most peculiar conduct for a member of the Scotland Yard force; I hope you understand that, Chittles? But go on; if your subsequent actions carry out what you promise, it does not matter. Go on, Chittles, I am extremely interested."

"Yes, sir, I fully hunderstand hit is most hunusual, but I 'opes, sir, you will tike the family into consideration in viewing thet matter. Hafter doing this I found time 'anging rether 'eavy on my 'ands, and I went back to look over the ground of the recent hexplosion. I found these in the gutter, sir!" finishing which mild prevarication, Chittles tossed the little sardine-tin down on the table before Sir Edward Arkdale.

Sir Edward gingerly picked up the tin and examined it with minute care.

"Why, it's a bomb with a time-fuse, isn't it? A remarkably ingenious affair, too. Did you find the person who made it? Where is he?"

"I gort 'im hall right-o," answered Chittles. "'E's bin a-mikin' these 'ere little bombs at 'is 'ouse an' a-tiken advantage of these foggy days to slink up to people an' drop one into their pocket, or to 'ang it on their back, I don't rightly know which. You see this one 'as a little pointed 'ook asoldered to the top. You will also remember, sir, thet all these here hexplosions 'ave took place on foggy days, very foggy days."

"I see, I see, remarkably ingenious! Go on, Chittles."

IN THE further relation of Mr. James Chittles regarding the two barrows and his adventures down in Mitchers Alley, as we know them, were given to his chief with exact truth and careful detail. Sir Edward waited with growing impatience for the narrative to be concluded, and immediately sprang toward his desk telephone as the last words were uttered. Chittles, however, grasped his arm before it could catch up the transmitter.

"One moment, sir, Hi believe it was hunderstood thet Hi ham to 'ave further charge of the proceedings?"

"Oh, yes, yes; very unusual," answered his chief, "but what is your counsel, Chittles?"

"My plan is this, sir," said Chittles, falling into a chair beside Sir Edward and bringing the great white handkerchief forth for action. "Hi would harsk you to detile several men to arrest this Willigan when 'e comes to my Bow Street hoffice at ten o'clock; several more men should be sent to 'is Mitchers Alley kitchen at the same hour, to collar the hevidence, which I farncy, will be found there in plenty."

"A most extraordinary course, Chittles. The man should be taken immediately; I can not understand this delay; but, since I have given you my word, I suppose your plan must be followed. I will send out the details as you suggest. See to it that your man is there. If you are wise you will keep very close to him from now until ten o'clock to-morrow; he may smell a rat already, for all you know."

The many varying bells of London had not been ringing forth their own peculiar and public versions regarding the exact and proper time to strike the hour of ten for much more than five minutes when faithful O'Tins came into view down Bow Street, pushing his barrow in the direction of Clum House. It seemed to him an odd locality for a pie-bakery, and he frequently extracted the bit of paper on which Chittles had scribbled the address, peering closely at it through his blue glasses.

The writing was little more than so many Chinese characters to him; yet his daughter had told him the words written there, and he appeared to derive considerable comfort

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from frequent reinspection thereof. He was even less reassured regarding the unlikeliness of the locality for pie-bakeries when he left his barrow and mounted the dirty stairway that led to Chittles' office. Having had a rather more strenuous night than usual with his asthma, his progress upward was slow and wheezy.

"Tins is tins," he muttered, "an' tins is money, but, blime my heyes, if I'd known I 'ad to climb hup so many stairs I'd a sent Tom for these. My ole pipes is too narrer, I ar'n't gort wind enough for stairs these d'ys."

ALMOST FAIRLY out of breath and staggering, O' Tins opened the door to Chittles's office. All oblivious of what he was to meet, he fell back in astonishment as two stout policemen placed a hand on either shoulder and he saw the room before him crowded to suffocation with newspaper representatives.

"What's this, what's this?" gasped O' Tins, lost in a maze of bewilderment.

"Whort is it, ole feller?" said Chittles in his moment of great triumph, stepping forward. "Thet's a good 'un, a-comin' from you! Whort is it? Well, it looks like we gort you this time; you're the ole feller whort's a-bin blowin' hup them lords all over London; bin a-mikin' sardine-tin bombs an' a-puttin' them in the pockets of Lord Hulster Cannonwrack, Lord Careton, and all the rest o' them. See thet?" queried Chittles, holding forth the open sardine-tin so that both O' Tins and the gathered newspaper men could observe it. "You mide thet, now, didn't you, ole feller? An' you accidentally dropped it on the walk when you went an' blowed hup Lord Hulster with hanother one just like it, eh?"

O' Tins gazed at the bomb, at the stolid, accusing face of the perspiring Chittles; he looked about him at the cold, unfeeling features of the bloodhounds of the press, on the scent at last, close to their quarry. He saw them all clearly, and he saw something else, wholly invisible to the others; he saw three little starved children, grubbing among the old tins for stray bits of decayed food; he saw the strange, spaniel-like, appealing eyes of little Polly peering at him through the confused press of people.

He understood fully; Polly and Eidel had read of evenings about the odd crimes to Tom Brines and himself; he had observed Tom mixing his strange powders; he had heard his tirades against the "toffs," as he called them. O' Tins had no love for Tom Brines, he knew him for exactly what he was: a conceited, brainless, selfish brute, lower in the human scale than the cowardly hyena in the animal, nothing more. But those three little kiddies, waxing so fat and doing so finely under the tutelage of Eidel, to them went all his thoughts, and, somewhere within his mind was the fixed idea that in their future life they ought not to be handicapped through being known as the children of so thoroughly base a criminal as the one who had killed the five peers of England. The entire matter was crystal clear to O' Tins; but all so wofully and fearfully wrong in the unsympathetic faces of those people crowding in on him.

For a brief moment the shabby old man hung his head, then he lifted it slowly, looked squarely at Chittles, and said:

"Yus, I did it!" That was all, not a word more would he add.

As O' Tins gave forth his frank and unexpected answer you might almost have heard a feather fall in that close room, so astonished were the listeners. Then there broke forth an uproar, and the old man was dragged, pushed and shoved away by the two policemen; Chittles, hero of the day, remaining behind to reap the delightful fruits of his wonderful cleverness, to bask for a time in the flattering sunshine of newspaper adulation.

CHAPTER IX

EIDEL FINDS A FRIEND

WITHIN a remarkably short time the newspaper venders broke out all over London, wherever there was not a police officer handy to stop them, crying the tidings to an eager people:

"Terruble secrite solved! 'Orr'ble detiles! Jeems Ed'ard Chittles, the grite criminal inwestigator, nabs the murderer o' Lord Hulster! 'Orr'ble detiles of 'ow Willigan, alias O' Tins, committed the gritest crimes o' the century! Full confession."

As the day wore on and evening came, the news reached Whitechapel, finding there an even more ravenous public for newspapers than in the city itself, many a family going without bread, yes, and even beer, to regale itself on the fascinating

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story of the crimes and the astounding cleverness of Mr. James Chittles. There were two closely printed pages of it, not forgetting a detailed recapitulation of all the previously known facts, and the name of Mr. James Edward Chittles, in full each time, occurred on no less than seventy separate occasions.

Eidel Willigan, returning rapidly along the street from her long day's labors in the millinery shop, was startled by the hoarse voice of an old woman, standing on the corner of Great Donegal Street, holding a bundle of frayed papers beneath her arm and crying the news.

Hearing her father's name immediately started a train of anxious thoughts, and Eidel eagerly questioned the blear-eyed old vender of papers, being without a single penny to purchase one.

"Mother," she said, "I haven't a halfpenny to buy a paper, but that is my father's name in there, that Old Tins, and I want to see what it is all about."

"Oh ho! so you're O' Tins's gel, eh?" queried the vender. "Well 'e's in trouble aplenty; they've gort 'im o' right, o' right. 'Ere, me gel, tike this piper and 'eartily welcome to it, it didn't cost me anyfink. I picked 'em all hup darn in the tube, smooved 'em hout and 'ave sold twenty a'ready. Poor chicken, you're hin for it, too; thet you are, now."

EIDEL sat down on a convenient stoop near a street light and devoured the "'orr'ble detiles" with tears in her eyes. Why her father had confessed she could not understand; she was certain that he was not guilty, equally certain that the crimes were the work of Tom Brines, having heard all his talk about getting even with the "toffs," and seen his messing about the furnace with strange mixtures of moist white powder such as the paper in her hand described. Thinking the matter over, her sorrow gave place to anger at the injustice being done her father, and Eidel again opened the paper, searching for the address of Mr. James Chittles, Criminal Investigator. She readily found it, so frequently was it repeated:

"Clum House, Bow Street, that's him, eh? Well, I'll see about this very quickly," muttered Eidel, and off she started to find Clum House. The journey was long and tiresome, yet women under excitement have no sense of fatigue, and Eidel found the building; luckily, also, she found Chittles therein, ensconced in a comfortable chair, and still reeling off facts to a few belated newspaper representatives in quest of information for their next morning issues.

"Here you!" shouted Eidel, waving the newspaper before the fat face of the amazed Chittles, "What does this mean? Father never blowed up them lords, it was Tom Brines as done it; father never made no hyrox, it was Tom Brines as made it; father never made no sardine bombs, either, Tom Brines made 'em. You go on, and get my father out of quod!"

"Here, here, my fine gel, thet won't do, not at hall; thet won't go darn here, you know," answered Chittles. "'E's confessed. 'E ort to know whether 'e done it or not, 'adn't he? No, no! gel; you carn't get your father out o' quod thet easy. Go along with you, or I'll have you hup along with 'im."

"But I tell you he never done it, father never did!" shouted Eidel, not to be so easily talked down while she felt certain of her facts.

But Chittles was obdurate and refused to have his private convictions brought into question, especially before the newspaper men, and he led Eidel toward the stairs in spite of her protests.

"Now then, my good gel, you'll 'ave to flit. I've very himportant matters on 'and hinside. Get along with you!" said Chittles, as he returned to his office and the free dispensing of journalistic pabulum.

There was one newspaper-writer, however, who appeared to scent more of a sensation in the few words of Eidel Willigan than in the oft-repeated story of Mr. James Chittles, and he followed that young lady down to the street, walking beside her as she made her sobbing progress back toward Whitechapel.

It just happened that this young man was the same unimportant journalist who had formerly played watch-dog at the office door of Chittles for three long days and nights, awaiting his return there, and it may be barely possible that this same weary vigil had not softened his heart toward the heavy-weight representative of Scotland Yard cleverness. This young scribbler represented a newly established morning newspaper, the *Cosmopolite*, and his name was Neil Melbourne.

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"Won't you tell me all about this affair, Miss Willigan? Perhaps I can help you." said the young man, falling into step with Eidel. "I am a newspaper representative; the *Cosmopolite* is my paper."

TO BE addressed as Miss Willigan was so extremely unusual with Eidel that it instantly prepossessed her in the journalist's favor, and she left off mopping her eyes long enough to look into his face; finding nothing visible there save a whole-hearted interest, Eidel told him in careful detail all the facts regarding Tom Brines, his temper and his actions, as she had closely observed them. Neither did she forget to mention the many good deeds of her father, and the splendid reputation he bore in the neighborhood of Mitchers Alley.

"Why, it's just as plain as the nose on your face!" said young Neil as Eidel completed her story. "But why on earth did your father confess?"

"I don't know, I don't know, unless it was to keep Tom Brines free; father's always been a-doing something of that sort for some one; yet why he wanted to keep that blamed gabby rotter out o' quod gets me," answered Eidel, again bursting into tears.

"Oh, well, perhaps he hasn't confessed at all; it may be only a cock-and-bull story of that conceited Chittles; somehow I haven't much faith in that fellow, he seems altogether too thick-headed to suit me," said Neil comfortingly. "Now I will tell you what we must do at once; that is, go and see Sir Edward Arkdale, the head of Scotland Yard, and tell him your story. Will you come with me, Miss Willigan?"

It is quite safe to predict that O'Tins's pretty daughter would have gone almost anywhere with so nice spoken a young man, especially one who invariably addressed her as "Miss Willigan," and she quickly consented to accompany the journalist to Sir Edward Arkdale's home, a location with which Neil was already familiar, since he had been there in quest of news a score and more of times within the last few weeks.

Eidel's excellent first impression of Neil Melbourne was further strengthened by the fact that they made the journey to Sir Edward's town house in a motor-omnibus, instead of walking, as she expected, and her weary body, now sensing the reaction, sang grateful blessings for the young man's forethought all the way there.

Neil gave his card to the butler at the door, after having written on the back thereof:

> May I have a few moments' talk regarding entirely new and startling development in the recent explosion cases?

Sir Edward Arkdale, busy in the library with his report-sheets, sighed gently as he read the message handed to him.

"More of those infernal explosion developments. I believe the affair will drive me quite insane, it's on my nerves night and day already. Very well, Sampler, show the young man in here; let us hear what he has to say."

EIDEL'S facts, precisely as she had related them to Neil Melbourne, were rapidly communicated to the chief of Scotland Yard, in whom they aroused righteous anger fully equal to his explosion of temper when hearing the report of Lord Ulster's death from Chittles.

"I knew it! I knew it!" cried Sir Edward, "that Chittles is an unmitigated mullet-headed ass. I ought to have known he could not possibly get the matter straight. But, wait—how about this old man's confession? The papers and my men report that he freely acknowledges having committed the crimes. How about this, young miss? That leaves a point lacking, a strong doubt. Can you explain that, Melbourne?"

"I think, sir, that his daughter offers a plausible explanation of that when she states that her father is continually doing a good action for some one, and may have hoped to sacrifice himself to shield the parent of those three little children. Against this doubt you mention, we have the easily substantiated fact that Tom Brines had been getting materials to make an explosive compound. Since we now know what that explosive is, and its ingredients, it should be a simple matter to trace his source of supplies, as well as prove that he was the man who secured the materials to make hyrox."

"Very true, Melbourne," answered Sir Edward, "the course you indicate would produce strong circumstantial evidence. The case ought to have had more complete investigation before; it would have had it, but I gave my word to Chittles, before he disclosed his facts, that he should have con-

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trol, and it was rather difficult to evade the decision later, although I clearly see now that it was my duty to do so. Wait just one moment, please, while I confer with headquarters," and Sir Edward passed to the telephone in another room where he remained a short time.

"I have given orders, Melbourne, that this man Brines be apprehended immediately, and that his movements in getting the chemicals necessary to make what this young lady says is 'hyrox,' be fully traced, a matter that should be comparatively easy, since his crippled leg must make him a marked man wherever he goes," said Sir Edward upon his return to the room. "Of course, even though all this young lady affirms be true and susceptible of proof in the future developments, the entire matter will have to take its regular course in the criminal courts. Yet she may rest assured now that, if her father is not guilty of these detestable crimes, he will not be punished for them. From the information you have brought me I am strongly inclined to believe that the man Brines is the lone culprit in the case.

"Let me congratulate you, Melbourne, on your forethought in bringing the facts directly to my attention; your exclusive story is going to make the fortune of your paper, and, let me hope, your own as well. This young lady and her father will have much to thank you for," and Sir Edward Arkdale concluded the longest speech he had ever made with a pleasant "Good evening."

CHAPTER X

BACK TO WHITECHAPEL

THE next morning's issue of the *Cosmopolite*, alone of all the papers in the city, printed the full and true history of how five prominent peers of England met their death, a history fully substantiated by the information quickly collected by the forces of Scotland Yard. It was a signed story, too, and being a newcomer in the field of journalism, with a reputation to make, rather than one to ruin, the *Cosmopolite* broke ruthlessly through all the traditions of high-class British journalism and printed a quarter-page picture of Eidel Williagan; one of O' Tins; the house in Mitchers Alley; the three kiddies, and even the two barrows. Oh, but that was a great story!

On the following day the lively *Cosmopolite* came out with the full confession of Tom Brines, who, finding himself hedged about with circumstantial evidence enough to hang a dozen men, fully carried out his natural disposition by making a clean breast of everything and begging for mercy.

It seems the constant view of the pile of tins during his days of convalescence from the amputated foot had put a vague idea of bomb-making into Tom Brines's head. The newspaper clipping read by Eidel Williagan, with its description of hyrox, had crystallized this idea and resulted in his actually making several bombs.

Choosing a dark, foggy day, and armed with one or two of these little affairs, timed to explode within an hour or so, Tom would journey out along his tin-collecting route, hang about the home of some member of "Society"—reckoned by him as the source of all his wrongs—and wait for the resident to venture forth.

Then, taking advantage of the fog, and his inconspicuous appearance, he would bump into this individual, and making use of his long arms, either drop the small explosive tin into a handy coat-pocket or lightly hook it to the rear of his intended victim. Thirty minutes or so later, when Tom was safely out of the vicinity, the bomb would explode. If no victim appeared, Tom would pry up the lid of his bomb, pinch out the fuse and wait for another day and opportunity.

Tom's first crime, the killing of Lord Careton, had been rather more accident than design. That morning he had bumped into the peer as he came from the Carlton Club; recognizing the peer's features from his published pictures, Tom's anger was aroused and he retraced his steps, came up once more against his lordship's front and dropped a bomb into his coat-pocket. The fog then lifting somewhat, Tom felt it wiser to make himself scarce thereabout; so was not near when the bomb exploded several moments later.

Lord Althosrue's end was pure design on Tom's part. Having followed his victim from his home, Tom dropped the little infernal machine into the peer's pocket as he entered the New Palace Yard making his way to the house; in twenty minutes the

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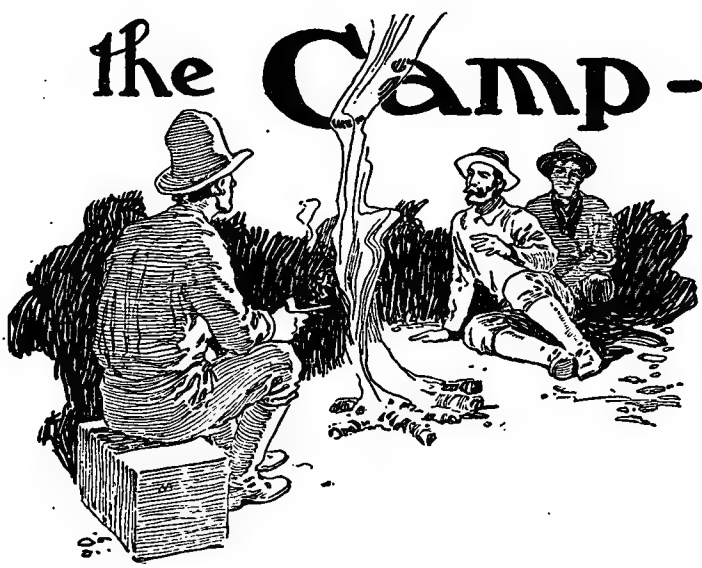
burning fuse reached the hyrox and the explosion occurred.

It was all very simple, yet this undersized, uneducated Whitechapel rat had thus succeeded in terrorizing the world's largest city and made Scotland Yard appear like a police kindergarten. Had he not chanced to drop a second bomb, the fuse of which had accidentally become extinguished, on the day Lord Ulster Cannonwrack was killed, Tom Brines might, very likely, have gone on annihilating the entire British nobility —if there were sufficient foggy days to give him shelter.

The pendulum of public opinion never swings but to go to the extreme. O'Tins, execrated yesterday on every hand, was today the hero of the hour; Mr. James Chittles, having enjoyed his brief moment of triumph, was now without a single soul to do him honor. And down in Mitchers Alley, Whitechapel, when O'Tins returned to receive a perfect ovation from his hosts of friends and the three little Brines children, who, by the way, had now discovered their proper name—it was Jugger—he was greeted at the door by Eidel Williagan and Neil Melbourne, two young people who seemed increasingly fond of each other's company as the happy evening wore on.

The Camp-Fire



A meeting-place for Readers, Writers and Adventurers

ONCE, in a Winter gale on the Mediterranean, W. Townend was washed off the deck of a tramp steamer. He managed to cling to the rail and haul himself back on board again. Among other things, his nose was broken. The skipper and the mate doctored the nose. Unfortunately they differed as to the proper treatment. The skipper's method was followed, but the mate disapproved. So every morning regularly they took off all the plaster and bandages to see which one was right. Fortunately, even a tramp steamer makes port sometime.

You have read Mr. Townend's "Dead or Alive" in this issue, and will recall his "Not Mentioned in Despatches" in the August number, that grim and grimly humorous tale of the Boer War—the mistaken defense of a house by a detachment of British against their own troops. We have quite a few more of his stories locked up in our safe. One by one these stories will get out of the safe and into print, where you can read them. When you—but I'd better wait until you have. Meanwhile you've already had two as a starter.

By way of a temporary introduction to the Camp-Fire, Mr. Townend is part

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English, part Irish, and part Canadian, has wandered over a good part of the world, and is now living in San Francisco. More later.

PARTS of it were told here and there; part by an English officer in Montreal, another part by a soldier at Fort Riley who had been all over the East prior to his enlistment in the American army. "The fact of the matter is that the Afghan tribesmen do actually look forward to the reincarnation of Alexander the Great with a belief that is startlingly parallel to the Jewish belief in the coming of a Messiah," writes George Vaux Bacon from Gary, Indiana, in regard to "Subjugating King Pete."

If I had any means of writing the title of one of our present serial stories, I'd here put down the venture that, from what Mr. Bacon has told me about the fascination Asia has always had for him, he is reading unsaid serial with particular interest and sympathy.

HIS story in this issue, "The Law of Bonham," R. B. Kidd tells me, is practically a true tale of adventure in the South Seas, and the hero, Charles Williams, is no creature of the imagination:

Williams is living to-day in the Hawaiian Islands, a picturesque character about Honolulu's waterfront. Unlike many cases where the appeal to the "Law of Bonham" sprang from a passing fancy, Williams' seizure of a bride proved the big romance of his life. The pair stood steadfast to each other until her death a few years ago. The old man felt very proud of his Bonham wife. He never forgot that she was a native of high rank, and their devotion was a relation that few people in Honolulu could understand. Although she had long since lost much of the grace and charm that caused Williams to face death to win her, she remained as beautiful as ever to him. Indeed, his loyalty to her was pathetic. He carried it to the extent of feeling aggrieved quite recently because I had published a photograph of Mrs. Williams which the old sailor thought did her less justice than another view that had been taken.

Williams bore the imprint of his many adventures, but, like most men of action, he was taciturn. Not for some years could Mr. Kidd induce the old sailor to relate any South Sea experiences. But after leaping, clothes and all, into the sea off Honolulu to aid Mr. Kidd struggling with an overturned skiff, Williams seemed to feel that a bond of sympathy had been established between them and he became as communicative as he had before been reserved.

One interesting feature of Williams' narrative is the fact that he relates history, for he is one of the few survivors of the old South Pacific. "The Law of Bonham" merits more than passing note, for it gives a brief, though graphic, picture of the most remarkable man who ever flourished in the South Sea—Captain "Bully" Hayes, master of the brig *Leonora*. For, as the story indicates, Williams sailed with Hayes.

SOME months ago I asked the many thousands who meet round the Camp-Fire whether some among them couldn't throw real light upon the mystery and conflicting reports about "Bully" Hayes. Time moves on and soon those still living who knew Hayes personally will have passed away, leaving many points in dispute, among them the question "What became of him?"

From many parts of the world came responses to my request—Australia, the South Seas, New York City, California, Staten Island. To Mr. Kidd and the others who have come forward with information secured at first-hand from Bully Hayes himself, from men who had sailed with him, or from other authentic sources, I beg to express my thanks. All the rest of you who gather around the Camp-Fire will, I am sure, add your appreciation of this evidence of the Camp-Fire spirit when the collected data are laid before you at one of the next meetings.

I do not mean that we are likely to solve all the mystery surrounding Bully Hayes. There are not many men who know. They do not all agree among themselves. Perhaps some points will never be made clear. But certainly the Camp-Fire has collected some very interesting facts.

Meanwhile, the discussion is not yet closed. Is there still some one else among us who can come forward with inside information?

"AS SOME of the Russian pontoon bridges were actually cut by the French during the enemy's retreat, throwing Bennigsen's troops into terrible confusion," writes Joseph Mills Hanson of his "In the Red Glare of Friedland," a story of the

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Napoleonic wars, "the thread of the story involving the conduct of an imaginary chasseur company, under the stigma of an undeserved disgrace, is plausible under the circumstances. The main background is an essentially accurate view of the battle of Friedland and the operations immediately preceding it."

YOU already know that Frederick William Wallace is more at home on the sea than he is on land, and that his knowledge of the Nova Scotian fishermen of the Banks is at first-hand. Here is a bit from him on "In the Bank Fog":

The descriptive stuff of the fog and the steamers in the enclosed yarn is taken from my experiences last Fall on La Have. The drive for port is also real color. The rescue is, of course, fiction.

It was curious that I should have been writing this when the news of the terrible *Titanic* disaster came in, and I thought at the time it might have been possible for some fishing-vessels to have rescued survivors.

AT SEVENTEEN he made up his mind to have as exciting a time as possible until he was twenty-five. He was twenty-five four years ago, but he's still looking for that same kind of going. And now and then John P. Brady finds a bit of it. For example:

In the Fall of 1900 I was along the river-front at Amherstburg, Ontario, looking at the vessels which were laying up for the Winter. Captain Frank Hackett, brother of that Captain Hackett who with his crew of eight was rescued in the late fifties by the famous heroine, Abigail Becker, during a terrible storm in Lake Erie, had a wrecking-tug named the *Home Rule*. While I was admiring this renowned old craft a wire came from Point Peelee that a schooner was aground on the long bar which runs out into the lake at the end of the Point.

It was blowing big guns from the northeast. Captain Frank was then seventy-two years old. He had a crew of six. I had a slight acquaintance with his engineer, and when I knew they were going out I jumped aboard and went into the engine-room. They didn't tell me to get ashore; anyway, they were already leaving the wharf, so out we went.

We ran out into the lake. It was my first experience in a storm, and that old tug turned every way but upside down. She could make only four miles an hour in the teeth of that blow, and it was late in the afternoon when we arrived at the Point. Nothing was in sight, and Hackett surmised the schooner had been blown across the bar and over to the Middle Ground, the most dangerous shoal in the Lakes. It lies right in the middle of the north passage and there is only ten or twelve feet of water on it.

The *Home Rule* was headed out into the lake and we hung about the shoal all night trying to bore holes in the darkness with our eyes. The tug drew thirteen feet, and the best we could do was to wait for daybreak.

AS WE got closer to the shoal we thought we could see a light bobbing close to where the gas-buoy marked the danger-line. We thought we could make out the faint tracery of the rigging of a ship, but could not be sure. As day began to break we found out we were right. A half a mile or so to leeward, and well inside the gas-buoy, was a big schooner. She was hard aground, and the combers were breaking over her and tossing spray to the mastheads. The crew to the number of seven, six men and the skipper's wife, were in the rigging.

Even as we made them out the crash came. Over toppled the masts and the whole wreck was smothered in foam. We had no boats on the tug, and the best we could do was to make a wide detour and get around to leeward of the shoal. We ran into the drifting remains of the schooner, but found no sign of life. The bodies were washed up on Peelee Island. It was a frightful sight and brought tears to the eyes of the veteran seamen who were on the tug. It was my first sight of violent death and I was horror-stricken.

In a few hours we were up against it ourselves.

THE wind shifted to the southwest and blew the top off the lake. The *Home Rule* plunged along for port. A big sea came over the port bow and smashed in the forward hatch.

The old tug began to take water fast. She could make progress only in the lulls of the storm. The siphon was started, but the water came in so fast it washed back through the fire-hole, and the pump was stuffed. The firemen stood in eighteen inches of water and shoveled for their lives. Every man aboard but the seventy-two-year-old Captain and the seventeen-year-old kid was sick. The negro cook locked himself in his galley and let the window down on his neck. He was black as the ace of spades when he started out on that trip, but he was the whitest coon I ever saw before it was over.

The men were badly scared. The engineer wondered how long the cinders and dirt would keep out of the shaft-bearings. The firemen wondered how long before the water would reach the fires. The mate wondered how long before they would be able to get into the shelter of the Detroit River. Being a believer in hunches, I never had any idea that it was going to be my finish, and was enabled to bear up pretty well for a greenhorn.

We got into the river finally, and it was none too soon. When he reached smooth water the bearings heated and the old *Home Rule* came to a stop. Hackett dropped his anchor and we poured water over the box to cool it off. At last they reached the wharf, but it was a week before the battered old boat was fit for sea again.

SINCE then I have been up and down the lakes in all kinds of craft. I was always stuck on the yachting game, however, and finally got on a newspaper. Had the first real scare of my life last Summer when in the Mackinac Race. Was on the *Vencedor*, which was wrecked off Charlevoix, and for a time thought the fat was in the fire.

Have been yachting editor of the Chicago *Inter-Ocean* for the past four years, and have run across a lot of men who have had some real adventures.

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The yachtsmen here sail their own ships, and they have the respect and the admiration of the professionals necessary on the big yachts. It is a real sight to see a millionaire with a fist as big as a ham throw the fear of the mighty into the minds of a sailorman who thinks he is going on a pleasure cruise when he signs on board a yacht. Some of these yachtsmen, if they didn't have the money and had to go out and earn their own livings, could qualify for bucko mate on any rough-neck ship that ever sailed the seas.

In Mr. Brady's story in this issue, "Captain Willy," many will at once recognize a fictionized account of one of the greatest yachting events in this country:

The *Shark* finished second in the Mackinac Race, but was given third place because of the time allowance she had to give to the little sloop *Mavourneen* which won the race. The *Amorita*, a big schooner, beat the *Shark* over the line a couple of hours, while the *Mavourneen* was about six hours behind, but won through the big time allowance she was credited with. The *Mavourneen*, the little thirty-five-footer which was credited with the championship of Long Island Sound in her class, was brought here last year and proved to be the most wonderful little craft ever seen on fresh water. She sailed in that gale to Mackinac like a steamboat and, having been built for the ocean, made better weather than the little boats constructed for lake work. Her skipper sailed her through the last part of the race unaided. She was running under bare stick until the wind shifted enough to allow a course for the Straits to be set. Then the skipper asked his crew to get up a stormsail. But they were all exhausted, so he tied the stick and got it up himself and won the race by a margin of half an hour over the *Amorita* and by an hour and a half over the *Shark*.

Mr. Brady is a Canadian, having been born in the little town of Essex, fourteen miles from Detroit.

A CLUB is being organized to be called "The Travel Club." Its objects are to further interest in travel; to spread knowledge of the same; to furnish practical information to its members and to safeguard their interests the world over; to acquire and maintain a library of travel and to establish a headquarters and a general bureau of information for travelers; to bind travelers in the bonds of good-fellowship; to aid and assist the good-roads movement, the conservation of natural resources, the moveme t for international peace, the preservation of historic sites, and all movements that make for bettering the facilities of travel and adding to its interest.

The Club's aim will also be to affiliate existing travel clubs and organizations wherever such an affiliation can be made, both here and abroad. It is proposed to secure a club-house in New York City, where many allied clubs can have their headquarters. Chapters of "The Travel Club" will in course of time be established in various cities and towns throughout the United States, and arrangements made for interchange of lectures, slides, photographs and information.

This ought to be of interest to many of us, particularly those familiar with the benefits of that huge and admirable similar organization, "The Touring Club of France." It is, of course, not within ADVENTURE'S province to stand sponsor for any outside organization, and it does not do so in this case. I can personally, however, answer unhesitatingly for the personal integrity of the chief organizer of the proposed club, Mr. Henry Collins Walsh.

Further information can be secured from him at 1204 Broadway, New York.

"THERE'S a nice weapon," he said, and leaned over toward my desk and handed me a special officer's Colt's .38 about as long as revolvers grow. And this in New York City, where they arrest people carrying guns, particularly if not criminals.

He had been using it outside of the United States, however, and, not in times of peace. Only one man to its credit, but with similar instruments he had removed three and wounded several others. Further details necessarily withheld.

HERE is something the Circulation Department wants put before our readers:

IF YOU are unable to buy a copy of ADVENTURE at any news-stand, you would confer a great favor on the publishers by sending the name and address of the dealer and we will immediately remedy the matter. The newsdealer will thank you also.

YES, the life of a full-fledged adventurer is far too crowded to be presented adequately in a few pages. Even a bird's-eye view of it is likely to be some strain on the bird. But it happens that one of ADVENTURE'S adventurers has a methodical streak in him and has not only kept some record of his experiences, but has reduced them to tabulated form. Here is an outline of his own life made out by Stephen Allen Reynolds, whose latest contribution to ADVENTURE is "The Spotted Passport," in this issue. To me it is extremely interesting, not only in itself but as an illustration of how packed with incident a few years of a man's life may be if the wanderlust has taken possession of his spirit. To the following it may be added in advance that Mr. Reynolds was born in Boston, went to school in Randolph, Mass., to boarding-school in Mystic, Conn., and lives in New York City:

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Age	Year	Month	Location	Remarks
14¼	1889	April	Montana	Sent out to learn horse-raising.
		May	San Coulee, Mont.	Worked in coal-mine.
		June	" " "	Worked for surveyor.
		"	Helena, Montana	Worked for Chinese restaurant keeper.
14½		July	Fort Custer, Mont.	"Hanging out" with 1st U. S. Cavalry.
		August	Crow Indian Reservation, Montana.	With pony-trader and freighters.
		September	near Belt, Mont.	Herding sheep.
14¾		October	Fort Assiniboine, Mont.	Hanging out with cavalry regiment.
		"	Williston, N. D.	Wiping engines in G. N. roundhouse.
		"	Grand Forks, N. D.,	Riding the rods, brake-beams and "blind baggages."
		November	Chicago, Ill., Buffalo,	
		December	N. Y., and Boston	
15½	1890	July	Boston Harbor	Camping on Sheep Island.
16¼	1891	August to April	Boston, Mass.	Working for Estes & Lauriat, hotel, & Adams Ex.
		May	Liverpool, England	On cattle-ship *Norseman*.
16½		June	London, England	Enlisted in Scots Guards.
		October	Caterham & London	At Guards Depot and Wellington Barracks.
		November	Dublin, Ireland	Attended Parnell's funeral.
			Donegal, Ireland	Tramped to Donegal and took steamer to Glasgow.
			Glasgow, Scotland	
		"	Canterbury, England	Enlisted in 5th Royal Irish Lancers.
		December	London, Hounslow,	Soldiering and tramping.
			Dover and Aldershot	
17	1892	January (?)	Chester, Flintshire, Shrewsbury, and Taunton	Enlisted in the 13th Regiment of Prince Albert's Somersetshire Light Infantry.
		March	Shornecliff, England	
17¼		April	Portsmouth, England	Embarked for Gibraltar.
		"	Gibraltar	Disembarked from Troopship *Golconda*.
17½		July	Algeciras, Spain	Saw Mazzantini kill three bulls.
18	1893	January to April		Side trips to cork woods, Malaga, Linea, San Roque. Seventeen-day trip Gibraltar to Fez via Tangier, four camel marches (days) to Fez with Sir Charles Euan Smith's Mission to Sultan El Hasan. Imprisoned for four days, and returned to Gibraltar on H. M. S. *Thunderer*.
		April 9		Embarked for U. S. on Anchor Liner *California*, arrived New York May 1st, day of the opening of the Chicago World's Fair.
18½		May and June		Wrote story for Boston *Sunday Globe*, and visited in Massachusetts and Connecticut. Also lobstered and fished and "coasted."
		June 10 (?)		Shipped on whaling bark *Canton* at New Bedford under name of "George Allen," for arctic cruise.
		July 4		Lowered for sperm whales and picked up barrel of flour off the Labrador.
		August		Nipped by the ice-pack in Hudson Strait.
		October		"Froze in" for the Winter at Depot Island.
		November to		Sledded to Repulse Bay, shot seal, hunted musk-ox, and dog-teamed to the "flaw" for walrus, passing
19	1894	January		away the time. Also caught a lot of salmon and salmon trout, and got chased by a bear.
		February to May		Sledded several hundred miles to the Fish River not far from where Sir John Franklin was lost.
19½		July 4		Helped saw a channel out of the ice to get the *Canton* into open water.
		August		Cruised up and down the Bay from Repulse Bay to Marble Island, whaling and trading.
		Sept. 10		Set sail for home after Scotch bark *Maidenhead* and bark *R. W. Tucker*.
		October		Caught off Newfoundland in big blow of '94.
		December		Coasted from New York to Boston.

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Age	Year	Month	Location	Remarks
20	1895	January		Sailed from New York to Galveston.
		January to May		Visited mother at Dallas, Texas, and worked for undertaker and in hotel. Wrote story for Dallas *News*.
20½		June 15	San Antonio, Texas	Enlisted in 7th U. S. Cavalry.
		September to	Fort Grant, Arizona	Stationed at Fort Grant, San Carlos Agency; side trips to Sheldon Springs, Silver City, Globe, and Geronimo.
21	1896	January to June		Chasing runaways up and down the San Simon Valley from San Carlos into Sonora. Discharged account injury July 31, 1896.
21½	1896	August	El Paso, Texas	Gambled and loafed.
		September to October		Prospecting through Sonora and Chihuahua until struck job with Corralitos Company of Mexico. Resigned paymaster job on account of strike.
		December	Fort Worth, Texas	Took train to Chicago.
22	1897	January	Boston, Mass.	Beat my way East.
		January to July	Randolph, Mass. " "	Learned painting and wall-papering.
		August 5	Seattle, Wash.	Sailed on *Cleveland* for Alaska.
		Aug. 20 (?)	St. Michaels, Alaska	Arrived.
		Aug. 28 (?)	Yukon River	Aboard river steamer *John J. Healey*.
		Sept. 16 (?)	Fort Yukon	Stuck on the bar.
		Sept. 21	Munook Creek	
		October 1	St. Michaels	Embarked for Victoria, and arrived after a trip through the Inside Passage, visiting salmon-canning plants.
23	1898	January	Dallas and San Antonio, Texas	Visiting.
		January to March	Boston	Working in hotel.
		April	Chickamauga Park	Enlisted in 3rd U. S. Cavalry as soon as I heard the *Maine* had been blown up.
		May	Tampa, Florida	Appointed orderly to General Shafter.
		June 30	Daquiri, Cuba	Disembarked.
23½		July 4	before Santiago	
		August	"	
		September	Montauk Point	
		Oct. and November	On furlough to Texas	
24	1899	January	Fort Ethan Allen, Vt.	Discharged February 20.
		March	New York	
		May and June	Paris, France	
		July	London, England	

and from 1900 to 1911 employed by the U. S. Government, in the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, the Coast and Geodetic Survey, the Internal Revenue Bureau, and the Department of Commerce and Labor. Visited Spain, France and Italy in 1906. Was Immigration Inspector at Ellis Island from 1903 till 1908, Canadian border till 1909, and the Mexican border at Laredo and El Paso till three years ago. Have investigated Immigrant Abuses, Contract Labor, and White Slavery.

And yet all the above, up to his entering the Government Service, happened between 1889 and 1899—only ten years.

For to admire an' for to see,
For to be'old this world so wide.

Yes! Gentlemen Adventurers all, here's to the Wanderlust!

CHARLES NEVILLE BUCK, whose novelette, "The Beneficent Burglar," you will doubtless recall, is at this writing heading from Louisville toward the "feud country" of the Kentucky mountains, where one travels with saddle-bags instead of a suit-case, much of it being inaccessible to wheeled vehicles and the railways knowing it not. He leaves the rails at Jackson, the county-seat of "Bloody Breathitt," and will simply drift about, gathering material and relying for shelter on the well-known hospitality of the mountaineers.

ARTHUR SULLIVANT HOFFMAN

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What Became of Jennie Brice?

How did she disappear?

Was anybody responsible for her disappearance, except herself?

Did her husband murder her?

Was she murdered?

Is she dead?

Where is she?

$11,540 in Rewards

will be paid by the publishers of EVERYBODY'S for the best solutions of this tantalizing mystery. If you have a spark of the detective instinct, here is your chance. You will get all the *evidence* on which to base your conclusion in a perfectly corking detective story called

"The Case of Jennie Brice"

which starts in the October EVERYBODY'S.

The author is Mary Roberts Rinehart, who wrote those tremendously successful mystery tales, "The Man in Lower Ten," and "When A Man Marries" (Seven Days).

You will find "The Case of Jennie Brice" one of the most absorbing, exciting stories ever printed in EVERYBODY'S MAGAZINE. Few stories you have ever read are so well told, so thoroughly mystifying, so well worth reading. It will be told in four parts.

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Now, we are going to make "The Case of Jennie Brice" doubly entertaining to yourself and your friends, by awarding $11,540 in cash prizes to those who best solve its mysterious happenings. The idea is that you and your friends in church, college, school, grange, debating society, social organization, club, or in your neighborhood, shall get together and

Hold a Mock Trial

on "The Case of Jennie Brice"

If you go at this mock trial in the right way, you will find it the most interesting fun imaginable. Your friends and acquaintances will probably enjoy it as much as you do, and you stand an excellent chance of winning a substantial cash prize that will prove acceptable in helping along club or neighborhood work.

If you will write at once to the "Jennie Brice Disappearance Bureau," care of EVERYBODY'S MAGAZINE, we will promptly send you complete instructions as to the proper form of procedure for a mock trial, so that you will find it extremely easy to do the thing right.

You can hold the trial soon after the 23d of November, when the issue of EVERYBODY'S containing the third instalment of "The Case of Jennie Brice" is published, when all the evidence is in.

Then, not later than the 20th of December, send us a report of the trial with your jury's verdict.

There are no restrictions of any kind in this contest. In order to compete you do not have to be a subscriber to EVERYBODY'S. There is no age limit. Any one—old or young—man or woman—can act in any capacity at your trial.

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How the $11,540 Will be Awarded

Reports of the mock trials held by the various contestants will be submitted to a committee of lawyers, consisting of Mr. Charles S. Whitman, District Attorney of New York, Mr. Herbert Noble, Counsel for The Butterick Publishing Company, and Mr. James B. Sheehan, Counsel for The Ridgway Company.

There will be 3 National Prizes, 381 State Prizes, 29 Canadian Prizes, making 413 in all. National Prizes will be:

For the best report received..... $500
For the next best report received $300
For the third best report received $200

National Prize winners will be selected from all competitors irrespective of state boundaries.

The 381 State Prizes will be awarded only to those in competition within the limits of each state. The number of prizes in each state is based on the percentage of population.

List of Prizes for Each State

Alabama	$ 75	$50	$25	1 prize of $10
Arizona	75	50	25	1 prize of $10
Arkansas	75	50	25	1 prize of $10
California	100	50	25	6 prizes of $10
Colorado	100	50	25	2 prizes of $10
Connecticut	100	50	25	7 prizes of $10
Delaware	50	25	15	2 prizes of $10
District of Columbia	50	25	15	
Florida	75	50	25	2 prizes of $10
Georgia	100	50	25	2 prizes of $10
Idaho	50	25	15	2 prizes of $10
Illinois	100	50	25	17 prizes of $10
Indiana	100	50	25	11 prizes of $10
Iowa	100	50	25	6 prizes of $10
Kansas	100	50	25	4 prizes of $10
Kentucky	100	50	25	2 prizes of $10

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Louisiana	$100	$50	$25	1 prize of $10
Maine	100	50	25	2 prizes of $10
Maryland	75	50	25	
Massachusetts	100	50	25	26 prizes of $10
Michigan	100	50	25	11 prizes of $10
Minnesota	100	50	25	3 prizes of $10
Mississippi	100	50	25	1 prize of $10
Missouri	100	50	25	6 prizes of $10
Montana	75	50	25	
Nebraska	100	50	25	6 prizes of $10
Nevada	50	25	15	2 prizes of $10
New Hampshire	100	50	25	
New Jersey	100	50	25	11 prizes of $10
New Mexico	50	25	15	2 prizes of $10
New York	100	50	25	17 prizes of $10
North Carolina	100	50	25	2 prizes of $10
North Dakota	75	50	25	
Ohio	100	50	25	17 prizes of $10
Oklahoma	100	50	25	1 prize of $10
Oregon	100	50	25	2 prizes of $10
Pennsylvania	100	50	25	32 prizes of $10
Rhode Island	75	50	25	
South Carolina	100	50	25	1 prize of $10
South Dakota	75	50	25	2 prizes of $10
Tennessee	100	50	25	
Texas	100	50	25	8 prizes of $10
Utah	75	50	25	2 prizes of $10
Vermont	75	50	25	
Virginia	100	50	25	2 prizes of $10
Washington	100	50	25	2 prizes of $10
West Virginia	75	50	25	
Wisconsin	100	50	25	7 prizes of $10
Wyoming	50	25	15	2 prizes of $10
Canada	100	50	25	26 prizes of $10

How to Try for a Prize

First of all you should write immediately to the "Jennie Brice Disappearance Bureau," care of EVERYBODY'S MAGAZINE, saying that you desire to enter the contest.

We will immediately send you full particulars regarding the details of the contest, how to conduct a mock trial and how to send in your report to compete for one of the prizes.

You will find a mock trial very simple, and a study of the details of this mystery immensely entertaining. The trial is sure to be one of the big events in your neighborhood.

It should be easy for you to win one of the state prizes—or even one of the big national prizes.

You should learn all about the contest anyway, and that you can quickly do if you write for complete information NOW.

Address: **Jennie Brice Disappearance Bureau**
Care of EVERYBODY'S MAGAZINE

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SPECIAL TO
TRAVELING MEN

WE have an interesting proposition to put up to you as a side-line that will net you a decent little addition to your income. Without much effort, either. Use your spare time for it.

We have made a special arrangement with the publishers of Everybody's Magazine, Adventure, The Delineator, The Designer, and The Woman's Magazine to supply newsdealers with these FIVE publications DIRECT.

We want representatives everywhere to call on the newsdealers and put up our proposition to them. By selling newsdealers DIRECT we can give them much larger profits than they could ever make under the old system. When they see our figures you won't have any difficulty in convincing them.

Write us for the details. You'll be glad if you do.

References—Dun and Bradstreet.

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Spring and Macdougal Streets
New York City

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This Remington Cub can look through the barrel and see that it is clean.

REMINGTON UMC TRADE MARK

AUTOLOADIN RIFLE

All the advantages o the big game arm with none of its discomfort or annoyances—

The recoil does the work of reloading and ejectio instead of pounding your shoulder.

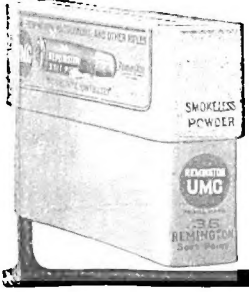
Five shots—just pull and release the trigger. You action stays open and warns you when it's time t shove in a fresh clip.

You can never get in a tight place—the gun ne clogs. Each shot strikes a one ton blow.

Simple action—simple take-down.

Send for a motion picture booklet explaining the ***Remington-UMC*** Autoloading Rifle's big points.

Remington-UMC **Metallic Cartridges** combine th highest velocity with the greatest shooting accurac Made in all calibres for every standard firearm.



When ***Remington-UMC*** cartridges are use the arm is guaranteed to the full exte of the manufacturer's guarantee.

Remington-UMC **—the perfect shooting combination**

Remington Arms-Union Metallic Cartridge Co.

299 Broadway **New York C**

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Adventure

October

15 Cents.

THE RIDGWAY COMPANY, PUBLI

and, all except the thumb and first finger. Hold
ger out as if you were ready to pinch somebody
each for your hat with the left hand. Then
eeping the pose of the right hand. When you
put your hat on your head. (If you aren't in a
en put on your hat when fancy dictates. If it's
't doesn't matter much about the damned hat
till carefully holding the thumb and first
pinch somebody or something.

...
...-stand
... you reach the news-
...ntly, keeping carefully the pose
of the right hand, smile pleasantly at the
proprietor. If you can think of anything
else to say, say it, but don't need to be a
nuisance about it just because you're following a
recipe.

Meanwhile gently extend the right hand, keeping the pinch position of the thumb and first finger. Grasp, with this thumb and finger, any magazine you see. Then pinch it. This can be done by closing the thumb and first finger—No, no! Don't try to take the magazine away! Not that kind of a pinch! Merely feel of it and see how thick it is.

Then do the same to another magazine, continuing to smile pleasantly at the proprietor of the news-stand. Repeat till you have pinched all the magazines he has. With the left hand pick out "Adventure" and the half-dozen others that felt thickest when you pinched them with the right hand. If you are rich, buy these and take them home; if not, finish your experiment right where you are, continuing to smile pleasantly at the proprietor of the news-stand.

Open each one. Note, with both hands, how much of the thickness is due to real reading. Advertisements are all right, of course, but we're talking about reading-matter just now. Allow for size and thickness of pages, allow for everything and anything, and see just how many pages of *real* reading-matter each one really has. If you find any with as many pages as "Adventure," then look at the contents-pages and see how many separate stories or articles each one contains.

Then take these two or three home—that is, if you have found any in the same class as "Adventure" so far as quantity of reading is concerned.

Having tested for quantity, now test them for quality. Read them. It is taken for granted that you prefer stories with some backbone, different from the kind you've been reading ever since you were eight years old, clearly and simply told yet *not* spoiled by a lack of literary quality; stories about people like real people instead of "book people;" writers who have been in the places and done the things they write about instead of staying at home and trying to guess at it.

It is also taken for granted that you like a certain amount of love-interest but are tired of wishy-washy love-stories and sickish slush on the sex-question; that you are normal and sane, like stories with action, like to be amused, aren't looking for problems to worry over and have a healthy interest in other parts of the world besides the part you live in.

Having now tested and compared for both quantity and quality, hasn't "Adventure" scored most points in the little Olympic games you've been holding? You're the one to decide.

P. S.—And how about the binding of these magazines? Does any one of them stay open better than "Adventure" or lie more easily in one hand? See why that is.

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